



THE INDEPENDENT

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From Russia with menace

A new mob on the streets of Brooklyn

INSIDE TODAY'S NEW-LOOK SECTION TWO

Virtual reality: a new cure for phobias

Health

New York's big three take centre stage

Fashion

Wealthy learn how to beat Labour tax threat

KPMG help £40k band

MICHAEL PRESTAGE and JOHN RENTOUL

Businessmen worried about higher taxes under a Labour government are flocking to seminars held by a leading firm of accountants to learn how to switch their money out of the country.

The accountancy firm KPMG has invited its clients, and a target list of business people, to 150 seminars across the country where they have been briefed on the tax rises the firm thinks are likely if Labour wins the next election.

Labour's Treasury spokesman, Alistair Darling, last night dismissed the exercise. "People should bear in mind that many of the advisers

that Labour could bring in a new top rate of income tax at 50p or 60p in the pound. In the absence of recent firm policy statements their figures rely heavily on Labour's policies at the last election. Labour only proposed a 50p rate in its last manifesto, but the Tories have claimed that parliamentary questions tabled last year on the likely yield from a 60p tax rate by Nigel Griffiths, a Labour trade spokesman close to the shadow Chancellor, were evidence of secret Labour plans.

Mr Darling said: "Anyone who thinks we're going to be fighting this election on the last ... manifesto seriously needs to examine their thinking."

KPMG admits the seminars have proved a successful way of attracting business. "We are not double-glazing salesmen, but the meetings have been profile-raising and they let people know we are in the market to give good advice," said John Turberville, senior tax manager at KPMG's Bristol office.

Mr Turberville said the success of the seminars was not surprising. "It is not hard to get people to come to a seminar where the subject is protecting yourself against higher taxes under a Labour government."

He said his clients were only engaged in legally reducing their tax bills. The idea of the extra revenue going to education and the health service was one most business people thought "a good idea in principle, but not for me, thanks".

Scott Davidson, one-time keyboard player with bands the Pet Shop Boys and Bros, and now a successful newspaper publisher and chairman of Bristol City FC, said the seminar he attended covered a good variety of topics.

He said: "Politics is not something I take a great deal of interest in, but I am concerned that incentives for people to invest may be lost. Entrepreneurs like myself, who put [their] house on the line to reap some benefit, regard the return to 1970s tax rates as horrifying."

In the South-west 250 people had attended the seminars run by KPMG's Bristol office in various luxury hotels. The first series were held before 5 April so that urgent action could be taken in the last tax year.

Labour's tax spectre, page 2

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who recommend changing investments to take a large commission or fee every time. All advice, warnings and threats should be taken with a large pinch of salt," he said.

A KPMG document headed "Pre-Election Tax Planning", obtained by the *Independent*, suggests that people with incomes of over £40,000 a year "will have less disposable income" under Labour. It says they should consider:

■ the use of offshore trusts
■ disposal of short-term investments before the election, placing assets in trust for children or other dependents
■ maximum use of tax-free investments now in case they are withdrawn by Labour

■ early retirement to take advantage of favourable capital gains rates.

KPMG, whose management consultancy arm does work for government departments, spec-



Loyalists clash with police after they were prevented from marching through the Catholic Lower Ormea area of Belfast

Photograph: Reuters

Loyalist parade ends in rioting

STEVE BOGGAN

Police fired plastic bullets into a crowd of Protestant demonstrators last night after a riot broke out when an Apprentice Boys' march was banned from a predominantly Catholic area of Belfast.

At least three RUC officers and two civilians were injured when 300 protesters pelted the police with petrol bombs at the end of a stand-off that lasted for more than eight hours.

After enduring a hail of missiles, police were given the order to draw their batons and drive rioters away from the Lower Ormea district, the scene last year of sporadic violence during the Protestant marching season.

Tension mounted throughout the day after the RUC refused to allow the marchers to pass through the Catholic area because of the fear of violence. Last year, a number of people were injured during a three-day impasse at Portadown, where Catholic residents asked police to prevent an Orange march.

Yesterday's violence flared after police and marchers appeared to have reached a compromise. However, with the arrival of another marching band and scores of Loyalist protesters, many of whom seemed drunk, a riot looked inevitable.

Bottles, glasses and, eventually, petrol bombs, rained down on police, forcing them to take cover behind a cordon of

reinforced Land Rovers blocking the marchers' route across the Ormea Bridge over the River Lagan. Finally, the order was given to disperse the crowd, leading to pitched battles in side streets along the route of the proposed march.

The latest trouble flared as Sinn Fein announced that it would take part in next month's Northern Ireland election, if the SDLP decided to contest them, a move which seems increasingly likely.

Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein's chief negotiator, said nationalists feared that the elected body would be an embryonic Stormont. But he seemed resigned to accepting that Sinn Fein would have to take part.

"We actually believe that the best way forward for the nationalist community is for the nationalist political representatives not to participate in the election or the elected body," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

"But the SDLP is a party in its own right and if they decide to contest the elections, then I'm certain that Sinn Fein will do likewise."

Mr McGuinness insisted Sinn Fein had a right to take part in talks whatever the IRA did, but said his party was willing to play its part in helping to bring about a fresh ceasefire.

"We can only realistically do that if we have a package we can put to the IRA, which will give absolute assurances and

guarantees that real and meaningful peace negotiations, without pre-conditions and within the time frame, will take place," he said. "We need to be absolutely assured that all the pre-conditions which are clearly there at the moment are going to be swept to one side."

The chairman of the SDLP, Jonathan Stevenson, said his party wanted to see the legislation relating to the elections before deciding whether to take part in them.

"The only pressure upon us ... is to get to all-party talks and to find a formula which will turn off the violence for good. If we do not see these elections as an impediment to that process, then we will probably take part," he said.

Slimming pills set to be banned

REBECCA FOWLER

The Government is considering a ban on some slimming pills in the next month, following evidence that 15 deaths have been linked to the use of the amphetamine-style drugs, while hundreds of other users have suffered serious mental and physical side-effects.

The potential dangers of the drugs, frequently prescribed by private clinics to desperate slimmers, have been outlined in confidential consultation papers. They vary from rapid heart beat to depression, dependence and even psychosis.

A Department of Health spokeswoman said: "There is concern about the use of these pills, and whether it is appropriate to ban them as slimming aids. They are all licensed drugs and have a clinical use, but the concern is whether the controls are tight enough."

The Government's Medicines Commission reported that many patients receive prescriptions on demand, and that the "liberal quantities" allow for a black market. The users are also poorly monitored by clinics, and often are not overweight in the first place.

The pills work by suppressing a person's appetite, or by speeding up the body's metabolism, so that it burns up calories faster.

When slimmers have taken such drugs, which were reportedly used by the Duchess of York who recently shed almost

three stone, they often see a dramatic weight loss in a very short period of time. But they may need to take increased dosages to keep up the effect.

Despite attempts by the General Medical Council (GMC) to impose restrictions, the pills have continued to flow among slimmers. The council sent a written warning to doctors on the harmful side-effects two years ago, and told them they faced disciplinary action for irresponsible prescriptions.

The latest report highlights the dangers of fenfluramine, which has been linked to five deaths and phentermine, which was linked to two deaths among slimmers. The drug deethylpropion has been linked to a further eight deaths.

Among the victims was Christine Malik, a mother of two who died two years ago, aged 31, after she attempted to shed a few pounds before she went on holiday. She collapsed within five days of taking diuretics, appetite suppressants and hormone drugs prescribed by a private clinic in London.

Experts, including the GMC, have advised that the drugs should only be used to treat certain forms of obesity, and under expert medical supervision.

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Abigail crowned princess among porkers



walk, specifying the route they will follow.

Experts were on hand to tell prospective owners about the pitfalls and little-known legal responsibilities of the hobby. Pet pigs have to be kept clear of farmland and a special licence is needed to take them for a walk.

Heather Powles, from Shildon, Co Durham, won the novelty section after Charlie and

Roger, her eight-month-old Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs, blew bubbles, ran through a tunnel and sat on command.

"This is the biggest audience they have ever had and I had no idea if they would freeze on the big occasion - but they've been amazing," she said. "I've been keeping pigs for six years and I have five altogether. They are clean and intelligent and more responsive than a dog to train. I get my leg pulled by friends but I'm thick-skinned - you need a sense of humour when you keep pet pigs."

Experts were on hand to tell

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2 news

Business takes off at Gatwick

The demand for Easter holidays abroad will see almost a million people pass through Gatwick Airport by the end of this week.

The duty manager Keith Booker said last night that business over the two-week Easter period was up 15 per cent on last year with 950,000 travellers using the West Sussex airport.

Some 380,000 arrived or departed over the four-day holiday weekend, including 74,000 yesterday.

"Next weekend is the peak, with 83,000 expected to pass through the terminals on Saturday and 87,000 on Sunday." Mr Booker said. Favourite destinations were the United States, the Caribbean and Mediterranean resorts, while short skiing trips and rugby tours were also popular.

Early yesterday, about eight transatlantic flights into Gatwick were hit by fog. The flights were diverted to Birmingham, Stansted and Heathrow airports for refuelling before arriving at Gatwick two or three hours late.

A spokesman for Heathrow said 150,000 people passed through yesterday. The busiest day of the Easter period so far was last Thursday, with 165,000.

On the motorways yesterday, there was a gradual build-up of traffic as people

headed home after weekend breaks.

An RAC spokeswoman said the M5 was busy through Avon as trippers returned from the South-West and the Severn Bridge experienced its usual delays. The A1 southbound through North Yorkshire to the M62 moved slowly through sheer volume of traffic.

Earlier, day-trippers brought traffic problems around zoos, theme parks and resorts. "There was congestion around Chester Zoo, Skegness was very busy, and there were long delays on the M55 heading for Blackpool," the spokeswoman added.

An accident on the A74 southbound caused an eight-mile tailback in Dumfries and Galloway.

The Health and Safety Executive will investigate report of nitric acid escaping yesterday from an industrial waste plant in the east end of Sheffield owned by Yorkshire Water PLC. The M1 motorway had to be closed for more than two hours, rail services halted and people were advised to stay indoors.

Police described the incident as an "accidental venting of gas" at Global Environmental Services, resulting in a yellow cloud rising high above the plant.

At the heart of the Bank Holiday bustle on Brighton beach



A walker passes the West Pier at Brighton yesterday morning; some flights into Gatwick were diverted because of fog

Photograph: Andrew Hasson

IN BRIEF

Figures give boost to cancer screening

Screening prevented three-quarters of the potential cases of cervical cancer in 1992, a report revealed yesterday. But the audit by scientists from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund also said the NHS cervical screening programme needed further improvement.

A total of 24 health authorities and health boards throughout the UK took part in the audit to test whether it was possible to routinely assess the amount of cancer prevented. Screening histories of 348 women with invasive cervical cancer diagnosed in 1992 were compared with those of 677 healthy women. Results indicated that screening prevented between 1,100 and 3,900 cases in the UK in 1992 alone.

Girl found safe

Missing schoolgirl Dea Adebayo was found safe yesterday at a railway station less than a mile from her home. The station manager at Dartford, Kent, alerted police when he recognised the 15-year-old. Police said she was returning home voluntarily after disappearing last Thursday night.

Mouse fire

A fire which wrecked the magnificent home of top polo players Simon and Claire Tomlinson last Thursday may have been started by a mouse. The couple believe a mouse ate through wires in the attic of their £750,000 mansion at Down Farm, Westonbirt, Gloucestershire, and caused a short circuit.

Foreign posting

Cut-price flight tickets have gone on sale over the post office counter. Cheap scheduled airline tickets are now available at the Trafalgar Square post office, central London, and could soon be on offer in high street branches up and down the country, the Post Office said.

Nice return

Inland Revenue workers have scoped a tax-free multi-million pound bonanza in the National Lottery. A syndicate of 19 tax inspectors from Glasgow is to share a payout of £4,245,315 from the weekend's £21 million rollover pot.

Prince of rails

The Prince of Wales has called for a progress report on maintenance work being carried out on the world's most famous rail bridge. He was in North Queensferry in Fife yesterday to meet directors of Railtrack, which is responsible for the Forth bridge. His visit followed a report from the Health and Safety Executive which said the structure was safe, but had been allowed to deteriorate. The prince heard how abseilers were used in repainting.

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IN BRIEF
Figures give be
to cancer rates

Girl found safe

Mouse fire

Photo of a
woman

Joy is 150

Slimming pills: Women often unaware of potential perils as they strive for 'unnatural ideal'

Danger drugs freely given to all who ask

For thousands of slimmers it was irresistible: a pill that makes you thin. But the cost has proved higher than they imagined, with evidence that 15 deaths have been linked to the controversial drugs, and that many more users have suffered disturbing side effects.

In recent years the pills have become an increasingly prominent part of the £1bn slimming industry in Britain. Many users experienced a dramatic weight loss in a matter of only weeks while using the drugs, which suppress the appetite or speed up the metabolism.

But the use of the pills, obtained mostly from private slimming clinics, has caused growing concern among medical experts. Among the side effects are addiction, insomnia, depression, hair-loss, restlessness, hallucinations and, at worst, death.

Despite efforts to control the spread of the drugs, hand-

Analysis

ed out in liberal quantities by the clinics for between £25 and £50 for a six-week supply, their attraction has been widespread among anxious slimmers, many of whom are not even medically overweight.

The Duchess of York and Whitney Houston, the singer, have reportedly taken slimming drugs. Ms Houston was rushed to hospital with an irregular heartbeat after she attempted to shed weight quickly following the birth of her daughter in 1993.

Dr Michael Spiro, adviser to Slimmers Clubs UK, is among those who do not wish to see the drugs banned, but brought under more rigid control, for use only in extreme cases of obesity. He believes the drugs should only be available on NHS pre-

scriptions, from approved doctors and specialists in obesity.

Dr Spiro stressed the best way to lose weight for most people was a healthy diet, with low fat and refined sugar contents, and plenty of exercise. He said: "Pills should only really be prescribed for people who are extremely overweight and have tried traditional methods of dieting and have failed."

The drugs fall into two main groups: appetite suppressants, stimulants which work like amphetamines, speeding up the metabolism and burning up more energy; and diuretics, which can strip the body of water and potassium.

The most disturbing trend is the use of the drugs among women who are not medically overweight, but still wish to shed pounds. Many are competing with the waif-like figures of catwalk models like Kate Moss and Jodie Kidd, who have created an unnatural ideal.

One of the first casualties was Mavis Fryer, a former model who died three years ago, aged 52, after an addiction to slimming pills that spanned 30 years. She first started taking them when Twiggy, the first super-waif, had created the look.

Miss Fryer was forced to take more and more pills for them to take effect, but her weight still ballooned to 15 stone, and when she died she was taking 20 times the recommended dose of Duramine.

Shirley Farrell, 36, a receptionist from Dagenham, Essex, is among those who had a genuine weight problem, but experienced disturbing side-effects from slimming pills and also found the weight loss temporary. She went to a private clinic in Ilford when her weight reached 18 stone and paid £500 for a six-month course of pills.

"The doctor didn't even give me a medical check-up. He simply weighed me and dished out pills and a diet sheet," she said. "I still don't know what they were. It's ripping people off when they're extremely vulnerable. When you're really overweight, you're so desperate you'd try anything."

Although Ms Farrell lost three stone, she regained the weight as soon as she stopped taking the pills, and she also suffered from depression and fatigue. Only when she left the clinic and followed a healthy eating plan, did her weight drop properly to 11st 8lb.

Rebecca Fowler



Role model: The super-waif image of top models such as Kate Moss (pictured) is a spur to dieters

Father dies as he tries to save daughter

STEVE BOGGAN

Police investigating the death of a 60-year-old man who died while trying to rescue his daughter from a pub fight said last night that they had not ruled out treating the incident as murder.

John Burge suffered a heart attack after going to the aid of his daughter, Helen, 17, who was assaulted outside a pub on Sunday night. He was not attacked but detectives said they intended to submit a report to the Crown Prosecution Service and they had not ruled out a murder charge.

Mr Burge, who had bypass heart surgery six years ago, ran to the Fox and Hounds pub near his home in Oxford after hearing that Helen and a girlfriend had been punched by a gang waiting outside.

Sally Hendy, the pub manager, said that the gang — including young men and women — had hit the girls in the face. "One went to get the father from the house next door and he came out to help," she said. "He fell to the ground. Someone called the police and ambulance but I think he was dead when they arrived."

Superintendent Cressida Dick said a post-mortem examination had shown that Mr Burge died from a heart attack. "He appeared to have received no assault injuries that would have contributed to his death," she said.

"He died directly or indirectly as a result of this incident. Clearly, that has to be treated as a suspicious death. We will be sending a report to the CPS. It would be wrong to prejudice what view the CPS or a coroner might take by discussing possible charges."

Despite attempts by paramedics and police to revive him, Mr Burge was pronounced dead on arrival at John Radcliffe hospital.

Police said that several young people were involved in the confrontation while others leaving the pub were looking on.

Pub landlord Nigel Rich said: "There was a gang in here who left at about 11.45 pm. They had done nothing wrong and they all left quite happily. I was busy



Heart attack: John Burge, 60, went to help daughter Helen



clearing up and then the next thing I knew the police were here. There were a group of people and a body lying on the floor outside."

■ Muggers who attacked two elderly blind people on an Easter morning still were yesterday branded "despicable" by police.

John Butcher, 82, was carrying a white stick and was leaning on the arm of Gladys Wainwright, 76, as they walked to a friend's house in York for Easter Sunday lunch when the two young robbers struck.

It was the first time Mr Butcher, of York, had gone out walking after a lengthy illness, according to Ms Wainwright, of Wakefield, West Yorkshire. Ms Wainwright lost £100 in cash and her house keys, which were in her handbag.

Inspector Geoff Dodd of York police said: "This was a cynical crime, preying on people who are not only elderly but also unable to defend themselves in any way because of their blindness. It is despicable."

Clinics flourishing in climate of deregulation

REBECCA FOWLER

When hopeful slimmers enter the corridors of Britain's slimming clinics, for many it is a last resort. They look for reassurance and hope in every corner of these establishments. They take reassurance from authoritative posters and leaflets. Yet anyone in Britain can set

up a slimming clinic, and the regulations surrounding them are so limited it is not even known how many exist.

Despite concern that the clinics continue to cater for a vulnerable group of people — who are often so eager to lose weight they will try anything offered to them, at any cost — When they fail to take detailed

medical histories and prescribe medication without informing the patients' GPs, against the guidelines of the General Medical Council (GMC), clients are unlikely to complain.

The Consumers' Association (CA) carried out a lightning survey of four slimming clinics last year which showed a disturbing lack of rigour among

doctors. The association's researchers were prescribed slimming drugs such as Dospam, Ionamine and Duramine without any warning of side-effects.

A CA spokesman said: "We urge consumers to be very careful when visiting clinics, which anybody can set up. On one of the visits a researcher was told 'not to worry' about side-effects,

which is clearly not proper advice. You have to quiz the specialists as much as you can."

Although the Home Office stopped issuing licences seven years ago, amid concern that the prescription of slimming drugs was on the rise, they have continued to flourish. But there have been growing calls for regulation of the industry

Alice Mahon, Labour MP for Halifax, said: "At the moment the diet industry can claim almost anything they like about their products... the multi-million pound industry is completely unregulated. It fails totally to warn potential clients about risks and adverse side-effects associated with rapid weight-loss programmes."

Students find a new service to peddle



A passage from India: Oxford's first rickshaw service starting yesterday with university students pedalling passengers on half-hour tours of the city. The rickshaws have been imported from India for the £8 trips

Reliant car company sets out on road to recovery

The new-owner of the Reliant motor company will today re-open the production plant at Tamworth, Staffordshire, hoping that his rescue package for the firm — manufacturer of the famous three-wheeled Robin — into the 21st century.

And he will be hoping for better luck than that experienced yesterday by members of the Chesterfield Canal Society, who took to the water in a Reliant powered by a marine engine as part of a stunt to celebrate the opening of a renovated lock. A quarter of the way into the journey from Retford, Nottinghamshire, the engine failed and the crew had to paddle the rest of the way.

The company has been taken

over by Jonathon Heynes, in a £300,000 deal. Mr Heynes has said up to 90 workers could be back working at the plant within a month but he added that workers would only be re-employed when enough parts had been built to make the fibre-glass cars.

The company employed 110 workers before going bust. Only 12 staff remained finishing work on 50 incomplete cars after administrators were called into the company in December last year.

"I will be going into the plant to speak to them after the Bank Holiday and will then be speaking to former employees with a view to getting them back in," said Mr Heynes.

More than 350 creditors were

owed £1.2m from Reliant in

Bank left doors open on holiday

cluding former workers who are owed on average £900 each.

Mr Heynes has bought the UK rights to the car while a Far East consortium has bought the worldwide rights for £500,000.

Plans to revitalise the company, whose models also include the Kitten and Scimitar, include an open-and-close pick-up based around the original Reliant 850cc engine, and a buggy-style vehicle based on the cult Bond Bug car of the 1970s for sale to holiday resorts in competition with the Mini Moke.

EU rules will also mean a rethink in construction because new directives state that the majority of components in a car must be recyclable, which means the traditional fibre-glass body may well be replaced by steel.

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news

Poll positions: Labour accused of 'scaremongering' at Staffordshire South East as Tories bid to regain ground at local elections

Dorrell fury over 'sordid' NHS claims

Labour was accused yesterday of deliberately repeating unfounded claims that a local health centre was to close as a scare tactic in the Staffordshire South East by-election.

Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, accused Labour candidate Brian Jenkins of 'sordid scaremongering over the NHS' as he visited Tamworth's Sir Robert Peel hospital in the constituency.

"Labour's candidate has erroneously claimed a local health centre, the George Bryan Centre, is to close," Mr Dorrell said. "He had persisted with 'this wholly unfounded claim' despite a letter from Gerry Malone, the health minister, clearly stating it would remain open."

Mr Dorrell, supporting the Tory candidate, Jimmy James, said: "The Government was putting a further billion pounds into the health service nationally from this month."



On your side: Stephen Dorrell (left), the Health Secretary, with Tory candidate Jimmy James yesterday. Photograph: Newsbeam

Major's council may be only one his party holds

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister's own authority, Huntingdon, could be the only council which remains in Conservative hands when the local elections are held in three weeks' time.

Voting on 2 May will be the biggest electoral test for John Major before the next general election, with his own council the benchmark to measure Tory claims that they have begun a sustained political recovery.

With Thursday's by-election in Staffordshire South East

likely to be a matter of seeing whether Labour takes the seat with a record-breaking swing, or simply a massive one, the local elections will give a fuller picture of the state of the three main parties across England.

There are elections for councils covering about half the UK population: all the English metropolitan districts, one-third of rural districts and 14 new single-tier all-purpose councils. There are no elections in London, Scotland, Wales and two-thirds of English rural districts.

If the Tories perform as badly as they did in last year's 'wipe out' elections, Huntingdon would be the only authority of those going to the polls to still have a Tory majority, according to analysis by the BBC.

On last year's worst-ever showing, the Tories would lose control of their last urban council, Solihull (which they hold with support from the Ratepayers), as well as such prosperous bastions in the Home Counties as Runnymede (which includes Virginia Water) and Broxbourne (Potters Bar), and Macclesfield in Cheshire.

William Bush, head of the BBC's Political Research Unit, said: "If the Conservatives do as badly as last year, they will lose 650-670 seats – possibly more because the Liberal Democrats are getting better and better at targeting their efforts where it counts."

With the local elections expected to consolidate the Liberal Democrats' position as the second party in British local government, leader Paddy Ashdown has written to his candidates admitting that a strong showing was "vital" to the general election campaign.

The interpretation of this year's local election results is bound to be even more highly charged than in recent years, with the party 'spin doctors' moving into top gear. Tory Central Office is likely to seize on elections in the new all-purpose councils, where the results will be compared with elections in

the same areas last year.

If the Tory vote recovers, they have a chance of winning Poole and Bournemouth, currently controlled by the Liberal Democrats (backed by Labour in Bournemouth). The Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, will seek to capitalise on the possible loss by Labour of its one-seat majority in Portsmouth, although the Liberal Democrats would probably keep Labour in power.

Other all-purpose councils, which do not actually take over from the two-tier district and county councils in their area until next year, are mostly Labour strongholds, such as Bristol, Southampton and Darlington.

All the other council seats



Paddy Ashdown: Letter to his local election hopefuls

contested in May were last fought in 1992, just after the last general election, which was the Tories' best year since the late Seventies. Then, the Tories won a national equivalent share of the vote of 45 per cent, 15 points ahead of Labour. Last year, the Tory share of the vote was 25 per cent – fully 22 points behind Tony Blair's "new" Labour.

With the local election campaigns due to start next week, Mr Ashdown has lodged a formal complaint with the BBC and ITV over the convention that the right to the last party political broadcast before polling day should alternate between the Government and the official opposition.

Cash-conscious children play safe with pennies

Today's children know a nice little earner when they see one. Instead of frittering away their weekly pocket money they now prefer to build capital, according to figures published yesterday, writes Nicole Yeas.

The number of children piling up their pennies has doubled in the past year, while the number of parents expecting their children to save has halved, says the 1996 *Wall's Pocket Money Monitor*.

Psychologists put the saving instinct down to children becoming more competitive, setting higher targets for themselves and believing their status would improve with more

money. Susie Stewart, from the monitor, said: "While most kids have substantially more to spend they also feel the need to save more in order to make bigger and more expensive purchases. With average pocket money presently standing at £2.40 for all age groups, up 35p on last year, it has never been a better time to be eligible."

The 5-7 year-olds are really in the money, having almost doubled their income from last year, while 11-13 year-olds have seen a two per cent drop.

With money becoming increasingly important, girls in particular are willing to work longer hours in Saturday jobs.

DAILY POEM

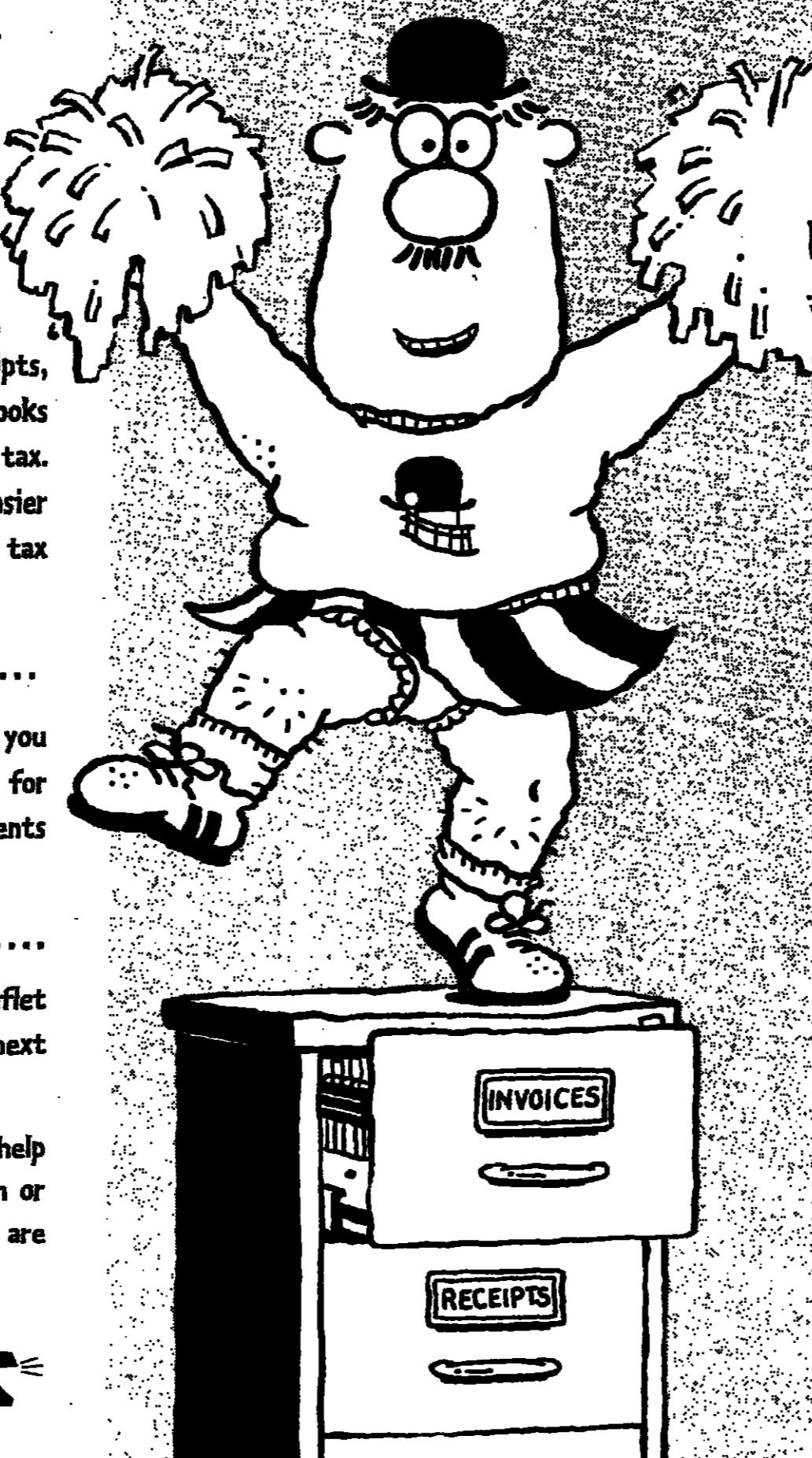
Son Like a Boy

By Heather Macnaught

Her son like a boy
was a lesser son
than her first
His skin was first praline
He had grimy hair
which lashed his cheek
She loved her boy
because he was hers
unlike her first
Her first son kissed concrete butt
and dialled a phone
He had a smart costume
But her son like a boy
wore bare flanks
and his hair grew more
The first son never called
her on his handy phone
Her lesser son
called her by shouting
across the water from his den
Her fond looks on him
Her proud hand upon him
The first son gained no mother
but a clenched deal, a clenched fist
and a passed business incentive
He passed over his roots
while his brother ate them

Heather Macnaught is 18 and comes from East Kilbride. She was one of only three Special Award winners of the 1995 W H Smith Young Writers' Competition: her entry, out of the 30,000 submitted, meriting special commendation from the judges. The award-winning poetry, prose and drawings of 81 children, aged 5-16 in 1995, appear in *Electric Full Stops*, published this month by Macmillan Children's Books at £4.99.

Winning entries from *Electric Full Stops* are featured in the poem slot each day this week. Details for entry will appear on Friday.



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Coma victim's mother attacks tests plan

The mother of a coma victim yesterday attacked suggestions that such patients should be used for experiments in place of animals and said she would rather kill her own son.

Violet Brayson, 34, a mother of seven from Ladywood, Birmingham, has just marked the 20th birthday of her son Robert. She and her husband, Ron, have cared for their eldest son 24 hours a day after he was found hanging in a young offenders' institution 18 months ago.

Since then the Braysons have taken their son home from hospital to care for him themselves. Mrs Brayson, who says she is hopeful that Robert may one day snap out of his apparently irreversible coma, said she would rather kill her son than see him used for experiments.

She said Professor David Morton's suggestions to use people in a permanent vegeta-

tive state (PVS) for experiments were "criminal". "I would rather kill my son than see him taken away for experiments. I am absolutely horrified because this is such an inhumane suggestion."

Professor Morton, professor of bio-ethics and veterinary science at Birmingham University, told a seminar on the ethics of animal experimentation that experiments on people in a permanent vegetative state

would give more accurate results than those on chimpanzees and would reduce the number of animal experiments carried out.

Professor Morton explained yesterday he had not advocated the use of tissues from human beings unless the decision had been made to withdraw food and water and the patient had made a will saying they would like their tissues and organs to be used for research as

well as organ transplant. The professor, who lives in Leicestershire, said he was outraged at reports which had taken his suggestion out of context.

"What I said was that the medical profession may soon be faced with people who have left their body's tissues and organs for research. Various animal welfare organisations are now circulating a donation card where people can leave their tissues and organs for research as

well as for organ transplantation. So if something tragic happens to them and if it is decided these people are so permanently damaged that is irreversible and they have decided to withdraw food and water these people will have made an advance directive or living will to say they wish their tissue to be used for research."

There are an estimated 1,500 PVS patients in the United Kingdom at present.

Mrs Brayson said, "My son can still feel pain and I would hate him to be hurt in any way. The doctors don't consider anyone else's feelings and they are talking about people's loved ones. He is saying he wants to test people like my son for experiments."

"I don't even believe in testing on live animals so how could I agree with it on my own son."

Professor Morton said that at

present after drugs were tested on animals they still had to be tested on human volunteers.

"Occasionally, twice in the past 10 years, something has gone wrong and these people may die. One might argue therefore that it would be better and do less harm if you did some of this work on people from whom we have decided to withdraw food and water instead of on healthy human volunteers."

New frontiers: The UK National Astronomy Meeting, which opens today, tries to answer some of the mysteries of the Universe

Peanut bar inspires galaxy theory

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

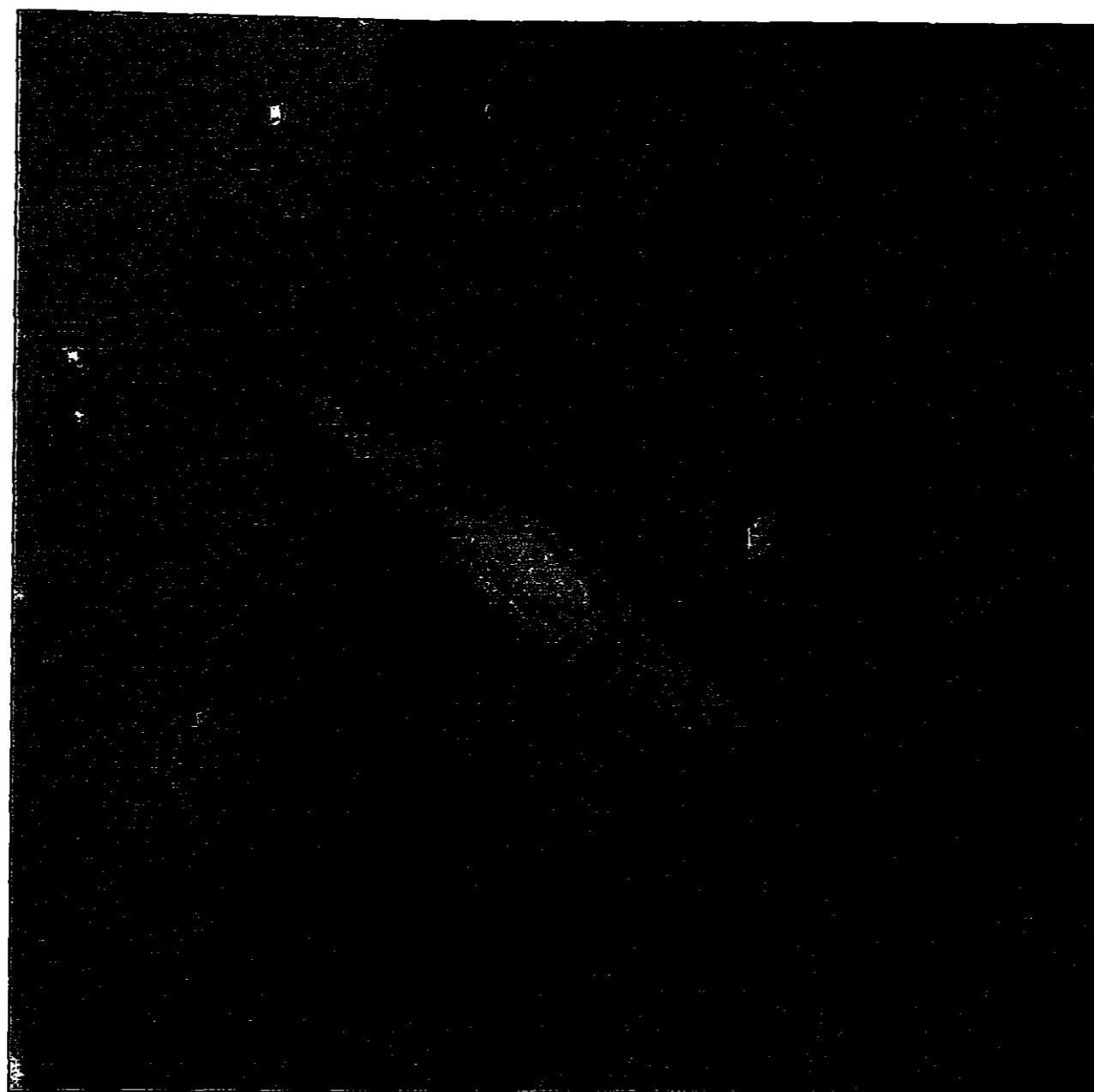
Art may imitate life, but now cosmology is imitating confectionery. Inspired by Galaxy and Mars bars and Milky Ways, Dr Michael Merrifield of Southampton University has come up with the "Snickers" peanut-bar hypothesis, giving for the first time a three-dimensional picture of the central parts of spiral galaxies.

Together with Dr Konrad Kuijken, of Groningen University in the Netherlands, Dr Merrifield has been studying the structure of spiral galaxies, such as our own Milky Way. Their work, which will be reported tomorrow at the United Kingdom National Astronomy Meeting in Liverpool, has revealed that where there is a bar, there is also a central bulge shaped like a peanut.

Although most stars congregate on one plane, forming a thin disc like a gramophone record, the centre thickens up into a "bulge" of stars and the new hypothesis provides an explanation for how these central bulges may have formed.

Around a third of the bulges have a double-lobed appearance, rather like a peanut in its shell. This is only visible in galaxies which can be seen edge-on. About a third of spiral galaxies (one of the most common formations) which can be seen face-on show a central bar — like distortion at the straight near their centres.

The fact that peanut-shaped bulges and bars occur in similar parts of galaxies has led astronomers to advance the "Snickers hypothesis" — that the peanut structures are actu-



Cosmic lens: Computer-enhanced image of spiral galaxy NGC5965, seen almost edge-on. The red bulge of stars shows the "peanut" in the centre of the flattened disc. The theory is that the bulge is formed by the buckling of a galactic bar

ally formed in the galactic bars.

Since no galaxy can be viewed both face-on and edge-on, we cannot witness both phenomena in a single structure. However, Drs Merrifield and Kuijken studied 10 edge-on galaxies, some of which had round bulges and some peanut-shaped bulges, and by looking at the orbital motion of the gas and stars they found unequivocal evidence that the peanut ones also harbour bars.

Plea for cameras in murder district

A Home Office minister called yesterday for closed circuit television to be installed in the Leeds district of Chapeltown following the murder of motorist Stevan Popovich.

"Had it been in place already there is strong possibility that at least one of the cameras would have assisted in the identification of the culprit," said Timothy Kirkhope, MP for Leeds North East.

Yugoslav-born Mr Popovich, 74, a retired bus driver, died after being mugged when he stopped to ask directions in Chapeltown on Saturday morning. He was due to meet friends before travelling to a Serbian charity meeting in Leicester.

He ruled that Mr Masari may not be safe in Dominica and accused ministers of an unprecedented attempt to "circumvent" its obligations under the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees "for diplomatic and trade reasons". And he gave the government a month to consider his asylum claim — a deadline that expired last week.

Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, has since let it be known that the Government is still searching for yet another country.

But time is running out for the Government. The decision by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, not to consider Mr Masari's claim for asylum is to be the subject of a judicial review later this year — and any adverse High Court ruling will be binding on the government.

'Safe' countries reject appeals to take Masari

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Attempts by the Government to find a third "safe" country to which it can send the Saudi dissident, Mohamed al-Masari — thereby protecting lucrative arms deals — have failed on deaf ears.

Attempts by other European Union countries and neutral Commonwealth nations to take the outspoken opponent of the Saudi royal family have so far failed, leaving the Government with a sticky problem.

Only last week, the Saudi Ambassador repeated warnings that the continued presence of Mr Masari could lead to the cancellation of the huge arms contracts and harm relations between the two countries.

In the meantime the deadline set by the immigration appeal court for the government to properly consider Mr Masari's asylum application — something it has so far failed to do for fear of upsetting bilateral relations — passed last Friday. But yesterday a spokeswoman for the Home Office denied the Government was going to ignore the ruling. "The ruling is not binding and we are still considering it," she said.

Home Office ministers have made no secret of the fact that plans to deport Mr Masari are influenced by the need to maintain Britain's cordial ties with Saudi. Since arriving in the UK in 1994, his persistent allegation of corruption and demands for a transition to Islamic rule in Saudi Arabia have infuriated the Saudi royals, who have

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The MP talked of his shock at "this foul and disgusting murder" as the dead man's widow Dragaica, 65, appealed from her home in Shaw, near Oldham, Greater Manchester, for help in catching the killer.

Her husband recently had a sister killed in the fighting in his former homeland, and Mrs Popovich said: "It makes it difficult that with all the trouble there he should die like this."

Police appealed to any motorists or bus passengers in the area at around 8.30am on Saturday to contact them.



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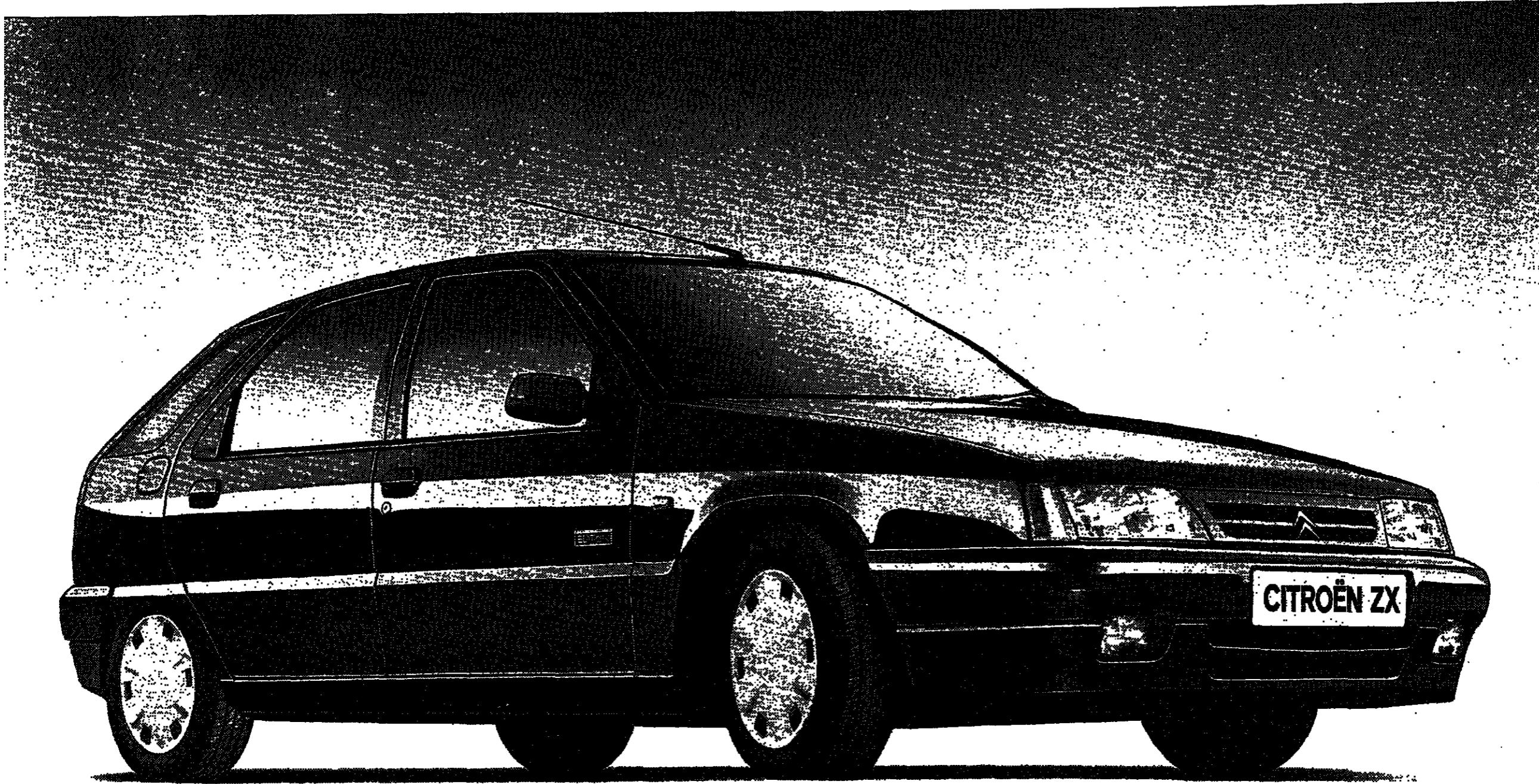
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news

Gear worth £5m lost in Whitehall over 5 years

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Nearly £5m worth of property has been lost or stolen from government departments in the last five years, including a consignment of Royal Navy rockets, computer chips and a horsebox.

New figures compiled from parliamentary answers show a four-fold increase in losses since 1991, with the value of property stolen or unaccounted for rising to at least £4,941,409 this year.

Ian McCartney, Labour's employment spokesman, said he began an investigation into information technology losses after it was revealed that thousands of pounds of computer equipment was missing from Whitehall.

"I believe there are criminal groups operating in or outside Whitehall," he said. "Equipment appears to be coming in from the front entrance and going straight out the back door. The MoD doesn't even bother to keep records of central records on the loss of items worth less than £100,000."

The Department of Health reported the theft of six items in 1991 worth £7,460. In 1996, 350 items were stolen worth £231,249. Serious Fraud Office equipment worth £1,300 is currently "otherwise unaccounted for" and the Foreign Office reported £85,000 worth of computer equipment stolen between 1994 and 1996.

Although computer technology appeared to be the biggest target for thieves, the parliamentary answers also revealed other major losses.

The Department of Trade and Industry had £49,000 worth

of chairs stolen, an "uninterruptible power supply" worth £9,000 was stolen from the Treasury and the Home Office reported the loss of 23 heat lamps worth £7,000 and a horsebox and its tools worth £6,500.

The Home Office was unable to explain the circumstances surrounding the loss of the horsebox due to the unavailability of staff over the bank holiday, a spokeswoman said. The DTI were likewise unable to explain the theft of the chairs.

The Ministry of Defence said a consignment of three rockets, worth £104,000, had been "lost" following the Gulf War. "We ran a six-month investigation into their whereabouts," a spokesman said. "It was decided they were either lost en route home, or that they were not missing at all and it was merely an accounting error."

Stressing that the rockets were not dangerous and were designed to distract other rockets from reaching their targets, the spokesman added: "We run a tight system and investigate anything lost worth more than £150. However, we are a huge organisation with equipment in places as far-flung as Rwanda, Cambodia and Angola. When equipment is lost, it might also be because it fell overboard during a storm."

The MoD also reported that a thermal imager worth £118,000 was missing.

Mr McCartney, MP for Macclesfield, Lancashire, stressed that the figures he had compiled gave only a selective view of Whitehall thefts, as they represented only the information given in parliamentary answers.

Death of canal twins treated as murder

Police are treating as murder the deaths of identical twins found in the same London canal within eight days of each other, writes Nicole Vass.

The body of Christopher Henry Langford, 38, was found in Regent Canal in Islington, on 26 March. A post-mortem examination showed various injuries but the cause of death could not be established and is being treated as suspicious.

His identity was established only after the body of his brother, Anthony John, was found 50 yards away in the same canal on 3 April.

A post-mortem examination concluded that Anthony, whose body was wrapped in a blue blanket, died from head injuries and his death is being treated as murder.

Police said both men were heavy drinkers and lived in various hostels around the Islington area. They were unemployed and single. It is believed they had family in the Bedford area.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "It is possible that they may have been involved in some sort of fight among themselves or with other people."

Island life: Lundy looks for better publicity – and a second new agent in less than a year



Visitors arriving at Lundy, which has been beset by droughts, storms and press interest in a previous overseer's private life. Photograph: Christopher Jones

Harsh times for an island paradise

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

When the rush of Easter trippers to the island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel has abated, the Landmark Trust, the charity that runs the seabird paradise, can concentrate on the task of appointing a new agent to run Lundy's affairs.

Whoever is successful – and applicants are already clamouring to take over responsibility for this tiny idyll – faces the task of restoring confidence in the island and its 20-strong community after a traumatic year.

Life on Lundy usually moves at a sedate pace. Its existence is known mainly to birdwatchers and nature lovers who appreciate the beauty and seclusion of this three-mile-long and half-mile-wide granite slab 14 miles from the Devon mainland.

But oil spills, tabloid stories of an affair by the then agent with the pub barmaid, a battering from inclement weather and the resignation of the present agent Tony Blackler after only a few months in the post have taken their toll.

At a minimum, Mr Blackler's successor will face the same problems that eventually proved too much for him and



Tony and Cherry Blackler: Isolated life on Lundy led him to resign after only a few months

his wife, Cherry. A combination of the weather and Lundy's isolation mean that the dream job was threatening their relationship. "We were apart more time in the seven months than in the previous 13 years of marriage," said Mr Blackler, 50, speaking yesterday from his new home on a smallholding in Cornwall. "There is only one boss on Lundy and that is the weather. I would get stranded on the mainland and it would be days before I could get back to the island."

The final straw came after Mr Blackler attended a meeting on

the mainland on behalf of the Landmark Trust and it was five days before he could get back to Lundy. The couple will return as tourists and in the meantime Mr Blackler said: "Our dining-room is full of pictures of Lundy. It is an idyllic place."

After leasing the island in 1969 the Landmark Trust spent 20 years restoring the buildings that include a working farm, a pub, church, castle and three lighthouses. At best Lundy breaks even financially. Recent setbacks have meant the charity will need EC grants to cope.

The last 12 months have

seen the profile of Lundy raised in a way that all but the most devoted advocates of the adage that any publicity is good publicity would have cause to regret.

Newspaper reporters joined the queues for the ferry journey to Lundy aboard MS *Oldenburg* following the resignation of the then agent, John Puddy, after an affair he had with the island's resident barmaid became public. The ensuing furor badly hit the close-knit community.

Also, given the island's isolated position in the Bristol Channel – exposed to the vagaries of the Atlantic – setbacks

such as part of the only road being swept away in winter storms and the island's sheep having to be evacuated because of drought caused by the summer's heatwave could be expected. But both in a year test the precarious finances of Lundy.

Tourism is the main money earner – the Landmark Trust has 23 holiday cottages – and so news reports that the *Sea Empress* tanker disaster in February had spewed crude oil on to the island's beaches was another blow. Happily, the beaches are now completely clear, but what long-term damage has been done remains to be seen in the waters that were in 1986 designated Britain's first statutory Marine Nature Reserve, with excellent conditions for diving and marine research.

Peter Pearce, director of the Landmark Trust, said a new agent for Lundy would need to be resilient and able to cope with the isolated life. The charity is also looking for a couple to run the Marisco Tavern, the island's only pub and restaurant.

Mr Pearce said the agent would be "somebody able to turn their hand to everything and anything and take an active part in island life. It is a unique job in Britain."

Best vest guide to protect front-line police

JASON BENNETTO

Crime Correspondent

Help has arrived for police officers unsure about how best to protect themselves against gun-toting and knife-wielding attackers – a consumer guide to stab- and bullet-proof vests.

The initiative follows growing pressure for all front-line officers to be equipped with protective vests after a rise in the number of violent assaults against the police involving knives and guns.

The new police manual examines a wide range of protective clothing. Among the qualities tested are the armour's ability to stop a bullet and knife, the weight of the equipment, the area of the body that is protected, and the cost.

High-powered rifles, handguns, and knives are all pitted against the armour. The *Manual of Ballistic and Stab Resistant Body Armour* judges whether equipment passes or fails.

The manual, which is being sent to all 43 forces in England and Wales, is an initiative of the Association of Chief Police Officers' self-defence, arrest and restraint sub-committee, which is headed by Tony Burden, chief constable of Gwent. Chief constables are expected to consult the guide before deciding how best to protect their officers.

Calls for universal body protection have increased in the past year as the number of attacks on the police has grown. Despite tests the Home Office and police have failed to find a universally acceptable design.

The situation has become so fraught that hundreds of officers have been using second-hand protective equipment donated by police in the United States.

Only two forces, West Yorkshire and Northumbria, currently supply protective vests to all operational officers. It costs more than £1m to kit the 5,000 West Yorkshire police. Vests cost from £150 to about £350.

In March beat officers from the Metropolitan Police were issued for the first time with body armour that protects against knives and bullets.

Over the last five years, seven Met officers – including PC Phillip Walters in April 1995 and Sergeant Derek Robertson in 1994 – have been killed on duty.

A survey of 73,000 rank-and-file officers across the country revealed last year that 90 per cent want covert and overt body armour. More than half said armour was not available.

But last year Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, refused to provide any extra money to pay for the vests.

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

on Monday

A new regular section, Family Life, that deals with the interests and problems of parents and children. Julie Myerson's column also focuses on home life. Plus: a new series – Do we need? – which challenges the icons of modern Britain. And, every, Monday unrivalled coverage of the expanding world of information technology in our Network pull-out section.

and in Sport

A 24-page tabloid section with all the action from the weekend's sporting action. Plus: the Monday interview in which a leading figure comes under the microscope, an unbeatable results service, gossip, speculation and fact from behind the scenes and the best in sports photography.

on Tuesday

Health: how wearing a virtual reality helmet could help cure phobias and other psychological problems. Plus: flaky nails are not simply a problem for the vain.

but a sign of ill-health, so what can be done about them? Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media.

on Wednesday

Bridget Jones's diary continues to chronicle the encounters and exquisite embarrassments in the life of Britain's most-read spinster. Plus: the midweek travel section, your money, finance

and law. In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

on Thursday

All our regular features, including Virginia Ironside's Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education

and graduate plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10½ inches

on Friday

24Seven – a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music



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ROBERT FISK
Tyre

After desertion comes mutiny. At least, it does in the so-called "South Lebanon Army", which is trained, uniformed and paid by Israel. At least 30 and perhaps as many as 100 of the pro-Israeli militiamen in the Israeli occupation zone in the south of Lebanon have been dismissed after a local officer decided to set up his own

political party, and then withdrew his men from artillery positions opposite the pro-Iranian Hezbollah.

At the same time, Canadian sources have told the *Independent* that about 40 SLA gunmen, without their weapons but with El Al airline tickets issued in Israel, are arriving from Tel Aviv every year to claim political asylum. Morale in the SLA, whose warriors are supposed to be defending Galilee from what the

Israelis call "international terrorism", has now reached such depths that some of its members have turned up in Beirut to seek sanctuary after being forcibly pressed into the militia.

One of their officers told the *Independent* that family members are being threatened by the Israelis with imprisonment in the old French mandate jail at Khammam if they do not provide one young man from each family for the SLA.

The same officer complained that one third of his men's salaries were being paid by the Israelis in fake \$100 bills.

Israel has denied involvement in the forgery of dollar bills. The notes emerging from the Israeli occupation zone are state-of-the-art counterfeits. So many are now circulating in southern Lebanon that United Nations forces in the area have long been forbidden to use any \$100 bills there.

It was at the isolated hilltop village of Khammam that the SLA mutiny began last week. The local militia commander, Riad Abdullah, demanded the right to form a political party and to organise his own "political assembly", ordering several of his men to distribute political pamphlets around the district advertising his intention. When they were arrested, he ordered the withdrawal of at least 30 of his subordinates, although as

many as 100 may have been involved, from Israeli artillery batteries in southern Lebanon, whose gunners are regularly attacked by the Hezbollah.

Israeli officers immediately ordered the disarming of the mutinous men and Mr Abdullah has been placed under house arrest.

Local Lebanese journalists have been threatened with expulsion from their homes, along with their families, if they con-

tinue to send reports about the rebellion to their newspapers in Beirut. The Hezbollah have repeatedly warned over the past six months that, whatever the terms of any future Israeli-Lebanese peace agreement, they will execute any Lebanese militiamen who have worked for Israel in southern Lebanon.

Their plan to break the SLA's morale appears to be working, not least because Israel abandoned many of its proxy Lebanese allies during an earlier withdrawal in 1985, most of whom were murdered within days of the Israelis' departure.

For the 2,000 SLA members who are still under arms, however, there appears to be no prohibition on the purchase of El Al tickets abroad; which is one reason why the Canadians are trying to discover just how dangerous life is for Israel's proxy army in southern Lebanon.

Civilians flee as war threatens to engulf Liberia

Monrovia (Reuters) — Shooting broke out again in the Liberian capital yesterday and gunmen from rival ethnic factions prowled the streets after clashes at the weekend which forced thousands of civilians to flee from their homes.

A US military assessment team was heading for the city by helicopter from Sierra Leone to decide whether to evacuate US and other foreign nationals because of the clashes which have sparked fears of a return to all-out war. And the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim, warned: "The fighting in Monrovia represents a new, dangerous and unacceptable escalation of the conflict."

The fighting began after a weekend stand-off between supporters of warlord Roosevelt Johnson and the transitional ruling council of state, which has sacked him as a government minister and ordered police to arrest him for murder.

Rival militiamen moved about in the city centre yesterday, particularly around the barracks of the former national army where Mr Johnson was reported to have taken refuge.

Diplomats said several thousand sand civilians had taken refuge in a US embassy annex and Washington had drafted contingency plans to evacuate US nationals. "The military personnel on the assessment team will determine if, when, where and how we should evacuate," if they decide on evacuation,"

one diplomatic source said. Diplomats said foreign nationals had been trapped in other parts of the city. "There are a lot of people who are still in their homes. They are confined to their areas," one said.

The radio station of Charles Taylor, the council member whose National Patriotic Front of Liberia launched the civil war in 1989, advised civilians to leave the area of the barracks. "Government military forces and police units are about to carry out a major mop-up operation in the area," it said.

Nearby residents said that militiamen from Mr Johnson's Krahn tribe were coercing civilians to go with them into the barracks. Many members of the former national army, the Armed Forces of Liberia, are Krahn. "Johnson forces are asking people to go into the barracks. They want to use us as human shields," one resident said.

Fighting prevented Easter church services in much of the capital of Africa's oldest independent republic, an officially Christian nation founded by freed American slaves in 1847.

The seeds of the crisis go back to February when the council suspended Mr Johnson from the government after commanders in his Ultimo-J faction ousted him as leader. The peace deal agreed by Liberia's warlords and civilian politicians created the six-member ruling council and envisaged a ceasefire. But the killing goes on and the 150,000 death toll continues to rise.



Passover prayers: A man turns away from the Wailing Wall during the prayers of Cohenim, or "priestly blessing", in Jerusalem yesterday. Thousands of Jews called Cohen — considered descendants of the second Temple's high priest — gathered in the city for Passover. They were guarded by hundreds of police and soldiers while a small group of extremists tried unsuccessfully to force their way into a nearby Muslim site

Photograph: Reuters

Ogoni anger at activist 'arrests'

FRANK AIGBOGUN
Associated Press



Gen Abacha: Accused of crimes against dissidents

Lagos — Members of the Ogoni ethnic group accused the military regime of detaining hundreds of activists before a UN team arrived in their stronghold in south-eastern Nigeria yesterday.

The fact-finding team was in the city of Port Harcourt, where the military dictatorship hanged the playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni dissidents in November.

The minority Ogonis accused the regime of arresting 30 activists and detaining hundreds of people in advance of the UN visit. One Ogoni leader said he had received death threats. The government denied the reports and alleged the Ogonis were plotting to stir up trouble.

The four-man team, which has been in Nigeria for 11 days, was to meet with Saro-Wiwa's family and with families of the four Ogoni chiefs he was alleged to have murdered.

A letter to the UN team by Ledom Mitee, deputy president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, said he had been threatened with death if he spoke to the team and hinted it should stay away.

"Before I am killed and another fact-finding team is arranged to probe the circumstances of my death... you may reconsider your planned visit to Ogoni," said the letter published in Lagos' newspapers yesterday. "I do not want any more Ogoni to be harmed, molested or killed. We have had enough."

Mr Mitee said government agents had been going from village to village, rounding up anyone they suspected might provide the UN team with claims against the government. The UN visit was prompted by the executions in November, when Gen Abacha took power in 1993.

which were carried out despite international appeals for clemency, and brought international condemnation.

Human rights groups maintain the nine were framed because of their opposition to the military ruler, General Sani Abacha, and to the oil industry. Oil brings in 90 per cent of Nigeria's export earnings, but has destroyed much of the water and farmland in the Ogoni region.

The UN team was given permission to visit several prominent political prisoners, including the jailed dissident Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner of the aborted 1993 presidential election, and the former military head of state, Gen Olusegun Obasanjo. They are among dozens of high-profile figures arrested since Gen Abacha took power in 1993.

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international

Serbs come to terms with Macedonia

Balkan breakthrough: Deal on forging ties with breakaway state eases region's tensions

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Rump Yugoslavia and its former republic of Macedonia normalised their relations yesterday, signing a treaty that may reduce tensions in the southern Balkans. Foreign Ministers Milan Milutinovic of Yugoslavia and Ljubomir Frkovic of Macedonia toasted each other with champagne after signing the treaty in Belgrade.

The treaty may enable Yugoslavia, which comprises Serbia and Montenegro, to break out of the international isolation imposed for the Serb role in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. The European Union said in January that it would not extend full recognition to Yugoslavia unless it normalised relations with Macedonia.

Macedonians voted for independence in September 1991, less than three months after the outbreak of war between Serb forces and the breakaway republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Since then, Macedonia has led a precarious existence, a fact underlined by last year's attempted assassination of the President, Kiro Gligorov.

The state is known formally at the UN as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a formula which reflects Greece's objection that the term Macedonia implies a territorial claim on the northern Greek province of the same name. Greece imposed a trade embargo on Macedonia in 1994 and lifted it last year only after extracting a promise from its neighbour to remove the Star of Vergina, claimed by Greece as an exclusively Greek symbol, from the Macedonian flag.

Macedonia's independence and identity have been vulnerable to pressure from other quarters. Yugoslavia's refusal until yesterday to normalise relations suggested Serbs were reluctant to acknowledge that Macedonia, known in pre-1939

Yugoslavia as "southern Serbia", was now a sovereign state.

Meanwhile, Bulgaria recognised Macedonia's independence but not a distinct Macedonian nationality.

Another potential threat to Macedonia's stability comes from its large ethnic Albanian population, concentrated in western regions and representing at least 20 per cent of the state's 2 million people. Albanians allege the Slav Macedonian majority discriminates against them, and want their separate national status enshrined in the constitution.

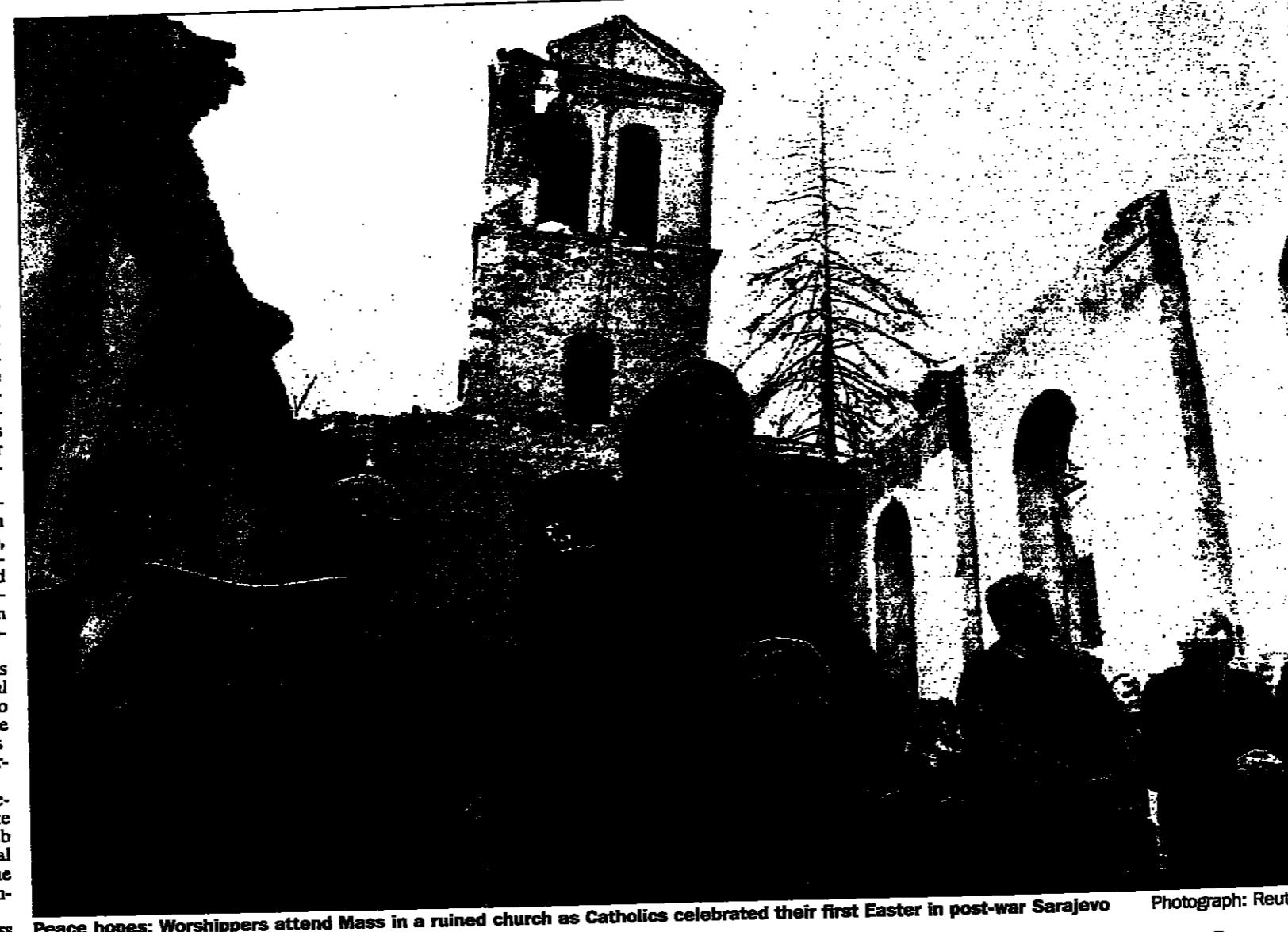
Yugoslavia has its own Albanian problem in the southern Serbian province of Kosovo, where tensions run high between the Serb authorities and the Albanian majority. The Albanian question is one issue on which Serbs and Slav Macedonians tend to see eye to eye.

Although Yugoslavia has won back some international respectability since helping to negotiate the Bosnian peace accord at Dayton, difficulties plague its relations with several Yugoslav successor states.

Yugoslavia is angry at Slovenia's efforts to reach a separate deal with the London Club of international commercial banks over its share of the foreign debt, incurred by Communist Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia fears that unless it is recognised as the sole successor to the Communist state, it could lose much of the gold and hard-currency assets that are frozen around the world.

For its part, Slovenia wants to establish itself on world capital markets and prepare for entry



Peace hopes: Worshippers attend Mass in a ruined church as Catholics celebrated their first Easter in post-war Sarajevo

Photograph: Reuter

Iran defends 'humanitarian' arms lift

Tehran (Reuter) — Iran, responding to reports that it secretly sent arms to Bosnian Muslims, said yesterday it had supplied humanitarian aid to Bosnia through legal channels.

The Iranian ambassador to Sarajevo, Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian, quoted by the official Iranian news agency, Irna, said: "Iran's humanitarian assistance to Bosnia was carried out

through legal and official channels." He did not say what kind of support Iran gave Bosnia. "He stressed the assistance was offered through various channels, especially Islamic countries and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, and there had been no need for US approval," Irna said.

Last week the *Los Angeles Times* said President Bill Clinton gave the green light to secret arms shipments from Iran to Bosnia's embattled Muslim-led government.

"Based on our Islamic beliefs and our nation's deep sympathy with the Bosnian Muslims, we considered ourselves bound to support and offer assistance," Mr Taherian told Irna.

In Washington, the State Department did not deny the re-

port, but said that despite its opposition to the UN arms embargo — which helped lock in a weapons advantage for Serbs over the Muslims — the administration complied with it.

Eight Islamic states, including Iran, last July declared the UN arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia invalid for Bosnia. In August, Tehran and Sarajevo said they discussed the possibility of Iranian military aid. They gave no details and Iranian officials have denied any arms had been sent.

Iran's assistance at a critical time when the Muslims had few other allies has helped establish a foothold for Tehran in Bosnia. Reports of Iranian fighters in Bosnia, in August, Tehran and Sarajevo said they discussed the administration's policy of not intervening in the conflict.

Kuwait — Police seized light weapons in raids on houses belonging to a group of Islamists who threatened a journalist with a pistol over a cartoon deemed offensive to Islam, the *Arab Times* reported.

Islamists raided
Kuwait — Police seized light weapons in raids on houses belonging to a group of Islamists who threatened a journalist with a pistol over a cartoon deemed offensive to Islam, the *Arab Times* reported.

Pollution charges
Manila — Officials said yesterday they were filing criminal charges against executives of Mar copper and threatened to blacklist the partly Canadian-owned mining firm after its toxic waste swamped a 15-mile river.

State of emergency
Colombo — With the government still embroiled in a civil war against Tamil rebels, the president has proclaimed a nationwide state of emergency that gives her sweeping legal and military powers. The opposition criticised the move as an attempt to curb political activity.

Visionary thinkers
Peking — Hoping to draw more tourists to their little-known temple, monks at Yongquan monastery have paid \$20,000 to advertise on local television.

They wanted to "better communicate with the outside world".

French doctors threaten strike over health reform

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

French GPs and specialists are up in arms and threatening a strike later this month in protest against proposed reforms to the health service that will directly affect the way they work.

The reforms, which emphasise spending targets and quality control and resemble in many ways the highly contested NHS reforms in Britain, are part of the comprehensive over-

haul of the welfare system announced by the French government last year to curb spiralling costs.

The proposals are framed in two draft ordinances — measures designed to be rushed through parliament with minimal debate — and relate to doctors on the one hand, and to the running of hospitals on the other. In a neat piece of political timing, the ordinances were conveyed to doctors' and hospital representatives over the Easter week-

end, making it difficult for them to mobilise an immediate response.

Leaders of the biggest doctors' association, the Confederation of French Medical Unions, were nonetheless so incensed that they have already called a strike for 24 April, the day on which the French Cabinet is to finalise the provisions.

One reason for the doctors' anger is their apparent failure to have the threat of financial sanctions removed. When the

health and welfare reforms were first announced last autumn, the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, mooted the possibility of freezing fees or docking money from doctors who exceeded state-set spending targets.

Through the weeks of public-service strikes, which were directed primarily against proposed changes to the social security and pension system, the doctors were quiet. Behind the scenes, they were conducting an intense lobbying campaign.

which they believed to have been successful. The draft ordinance on doctors' practice shows, however, that the proposed sanctions have, if anything, been toughened.

Doctors will face a freeze on their fees if they exceed the annual spending target — this year set at an increase of 2.1 per cent over last year. In addition, individual doctors face the prospect of returning to the health insurance companies the amount they are deemed to have overspent. The howls of anguish were immediate.

The proposed hospital reform

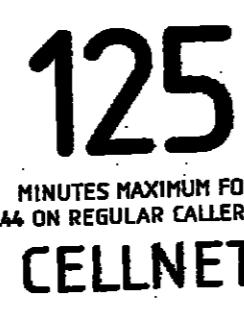
includes the creation of regional health agencies to negotiate contracts between the state and medical insurance companies on the one hand and the hospitals on the other. The contracts will contain requirements for quality of care, as well as budgetary stipulations.

It is unclear whether the government's tougher stance on health reform is a bargaining tactic designed to leave room for big concessions in the event of serious protest, or whether it is final. The doctors, however, fear the worst. They cite a recent estimate by the economy minister, Jean Arthuris, that the health and social security budget could overspend by more than twice the estimated 17bn francs. Although Mr Arthuris's deputy ran away from the figure as "rancid", doctors fear they might have to pick up the tab.

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JULY 1996

THE INDEPENDENT • TUESDAY 9 APRIL 1996

IN BRIEF

Rebel Kurds killed

Tunceli, Turkey — Security officials said yesterday that 27 soldiers and 90 Kurdish rebels had been killed in three days of harsh fighting in the country's south-east.

The clashes, in the mountainous north of the province of Diyarbakir and in the nearby Bingol, were some of bloodiest in the 12-year-old campaign by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) for autonomy or independence in the region. Reuter

Chechen assault

Grozny — Russian troops conducted intensive combat operations in south-eastern Chechnya yesterday, in an effort to drive rebel forces out of two of their mountain strongholds. AP

Molester released

San Antonio — A self-proclaimed "child-molesting demon" was released from prison after agreeing to "unprecedented" parole restrictions. Larry McQuay has asked to be castrated in the hope that it will stop his urge to molest. AP

Last sighting

Phnom Penh — A British landmine removal expert and his Cambodian interpreter, taken captive two weeks ago by an armed gang, were seen alive last week. Christopher Howes, 36, from Bristol, was working with a team of Cambodian mine removers. AP

Body parts arrest

Hackensack, New Jersey — Russian immigrant Vladimir Zelemin, 40, was being held on suspicion of dumping body parts in plastic bags into a New Jersey river. Reuter

Islamists raided

Kuwait — Police seized light weapons in raids on houses belonging to a group of Islamists who threatened a journalist with a pistol over a cartoon deemed offensive to Islam, the *Arab Times* reported.

Pollution charges

Manila — Officials said yesterday they were filing criminal charges against executives of Mar copper and threatened to blacklist the partly Canadian-owned mining firm after its toxic waste swamped a 15-mile river.

State of emergency

Colombo — With the government still embroiled in a civil war against Tamil rebels, the president has proclaimed a nationwide state of emergency that gives her sweeping legal and military powers. The opposition criticised the move as an attempt to curb political activity.

Visionary thinkers

Peking — Hoping to draw more tourists to their little-known temple, monks at Yongquan monastery have paid \$20,000 to advertise on local television. They wanted to "better communicate with the outside world".

Islanders set to be rid of carping Governor

PHIL DAVISON
Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands

The controversial British governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Martin Bourke, may be replaced in September as a result of pressure from the Caribbean islanders. Local politicians who went to London last week to demand his recall said yesterday they had been given to understand by the Foreign Office that he would not stay beyond September.

In a statement accusing Mr Bourke of "blatant and mischievous lies" by suggesting they had threatened him with violence, the politicians hinted a compromise had been reached whereby he would not remain beyond the minimum three-year term. He took over in 1993 with an open-ended term.

The statement signed by the Chief Minister, Derek Taylor, and the opposition leader, Washington Misick, said: "We believe it to be in the interests of all parties, particularly Mr Bourke, that he should be allowed to leave at the earliest possible opportunity." It was implied local leaders would refuse to co-operate with him during the rest of his term.

Commenting on a Foreign Office statement that they had threatened violence, the politicians said: "Violence will not form part of this struggle. We may not be on hand to wish him farewell but we are determined that Mr Bourke should leave in good health."

Mr Bourke, 49, angered most of the 15,000 islanders earlier this year when he spoke in an interview of drug-trafficking, rising crime and corruption. The politicians said his com-

ing tactic designed to leave room for big concessions in the event of serious protest, or whether it is final. The doctors, however, fear the worst. They cite a recent estimate by the economy minister, Jean Arthuris, that the health and social security budget could overspend by more than twice the estimated 17bn francs. Although Mr Arthuris's deputy ran away from the figure as "rancid", doctors fear they might have to pick up the tab.

At time in the Turk's Head bar on the Nookie Hill Club," said one resident. "But he's not venturing out much any more."

Mr Bourke, whose main duty is to take part in the weekly cabinet meeting, spent Easter trying to arrange the repatriation of 70 people from the Dominican Republic who arrived illegally last week. Growing numbers of people from the Dominican Republic and, more so, Haiti, have become the Turks and Caicos's main problem.

Officials say there may be about 6,000 illegal Haitians here, along with 5,000 legal, making the Haitian contingent almost as big as the population of natives and "belongers" (expatriates granted citizenship).

Locals blame the Haitians for much of the rise in crime, mostly burglaries. Officials say there is a Haitian mafia in the Haitian port of Cap-Haitien which charges people about \$700 (£460) for the trip, dropping them off in the shallow waters off the coast of the island of Providenciales and often telling them they are in Florida.



Eve of the storm: Martin Bourke, the Turks and Caicos Governor, outside his residence. Photograph: Paul Grover

international

IN BRIEF

Rebel Kurds kill
Turkish Turkey
Assassins
Assassins

Chechen assault

Molester released

Last sighting

Body parts found

Humanities race

Political change

State of emergency

\$500,000-a-day siege declines to spring any Easter surprises

The word at the Hellcreek bar, where the FBI, ranchers, and camera crews drink out their lonely evenings in Jordan, is that the government operation against the Montana Freemen is costing more than \$500,000 (£330,000) a day.

But yesterday there was no sign of an end to the stand-off, in which the FBI has surrounded a collection of bankrupt sheep ranchers and anti-government gunmen who promised to pay their debts with

homemade money orders. Two weeks after agents arrested three Freemen leaders and issued warrants for eight others, there was no sign that the fugitives were ready to give themselves up from their self-proclaimed Justus Township, a ranch 40 miles from Jordan, as officials had begun to study at the weekend.

"It is a very, very volatile sit-

uation," said Joe Quilici, a Montana legislator and member of the negotiating team that met twice with Freemen leaders last week in a trailer 200 yards from their farmhouse. "It is so deep and complicated, it's hard to get a handle."

The Freemen and the television crews overlooking the ranch spent a peaceful Easter

studying each other through binoculars at a safe distance. The FBI, though they man every crossroad for miles, were nowhere to be seen. The Freemen could be seen sitting on deckchairs in the sunset, clutching drinks, waving occasionally. They have warned the media to stay at least a quarter of a mile away and are said to be heavily armed.

"Here he comes ... come out

buddy," a cameraman whispered to his television monitor and then struggled in the dusk light to capture the most vivid image of the weekend: a little girl venturing out of the house carrying an Easter basket, followed by a man with a rifle over his shoulder. Three men standing by a truck on a bluff about two miles away were manning a Freemen outpost and they

changed shifts at teatime. Earlier, two young girls rode a horse. Geese honked as they flew over the ranch's pond, and a neighbouring farmer chased down a calf, in a curiously bucolic scene.

The Freemen are led by men like Leroy Schweitzer, 57, a former crop-dusting pilot who travelled the country offering financial classes in which he

Carolina, and a 10-year-old girl with her mother, who is a member of a fringe religious cult.

But most of the Freemen are members of two long-established families of third- and fourth-generation ranchers, the Stantons and the Clarks, who have lost legal possession of family land after running up millions of dollars in farm loans.

After threatening to hang the local sheriff, and handing out fake cheques, they now face several years in jail.

Hawaii moves to legalise gay marriages

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Adenouement is approaching in the bitterly divisive argument here over gay marriages, as Hawaii moves towards becoming the first state formally to legalise the practice - the latest round in a controversy which pits liberals against conservatives, state against state, and which could have an impact on the presidential election campaign this autumn.

Birring a major surprise in the courts, it seems likely that, despite the furious efforts of Christian and conservative groups across the country, Hawaii will have no choice but to put a gay or lesbian marriage on the same legal footing as one between a man and a woman within the next few weeks.

Driving the issue is a complaint first filed in 1991 by three homosexual couples in Hawaii that they were discriminated against when the state refused to allow them marriage licences. The case, requiring Hawaii to show a "compelling interest" for its action, is due be ruled upon by an appeals court in August. Most legal experts believe the state will lose, especially since Hawaii's own constitution outlaws discrimination based upon sex.

The outcome could be legal

chaos across the country. In an effort to pre-empt Hawaii, four states - Utah, Idaho, South Dakota and most recently Georgia last week - have passed laws explicitly banning recognition of same-sex marriages carried out elsewhere. A dozen have rejected such a measure, but 15 others are still debating it, several of them states where Christian fundamentalists wield much influence.

This in turn raises a constitutional quandary which only the Supreme Court can resolve. Gay marriages will be legal in some states and not in others. Unlike Hawaii's constitution, the US Constitution does not ban discrimination on the basis of sex.

But it does require that each state give "full faith and credit" to the "public acts and proceedings" of another.

Thus gay couples may flock to Hawaii to marry and obtain the rights which marriage brings, and then demand those rights be respected in their home state as well.

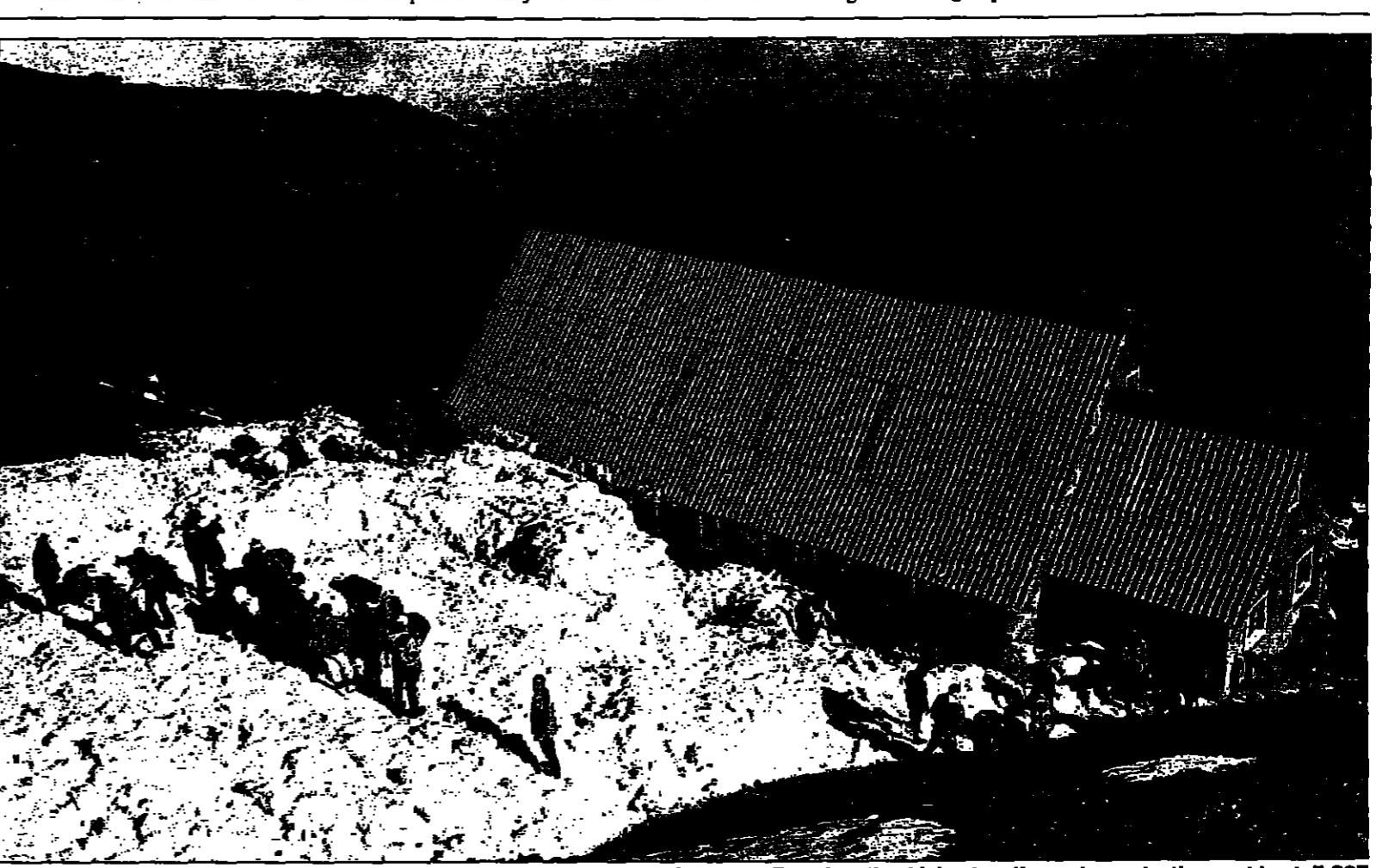
The rights in question affect everything from pensions and social-security benefits to taxation, alimony and divorce, even child custody and the immigration rights of a spouse/partner from another country. But, however weighty, those considerations pale beside the ba-

sic moral controversy, which could have a bearing on the presidential campaign.

Homosexual groups, an increasingly well-organised force, say marriage is a basic human right. They argue that to extend it to gays as well will only enhance the "family values" and social stability so dear to both major parties. Even so, both Democrats and Republicans will have to tread exceedingly carefully on the issue.

During his 1992 election campaign, President Bill Clinton wooed the gay community with some success - only to see his support for the right of homosexuals to serve in the military create a controversy the following year which shook his young administration to its roots. Since then the White House has not breathed a word on the issue.

And Bob Dole, Senate Majority Leader and Mr Clinton's presumed opponent in November, has also had problems negotiating the hazards of gay politics. Last year Mr Dole accepted a campaign donation from the Log Cabin gay rights group, only to have aides return it when he was told of its source. That volte-face, however, was criticised as a cave-in to the religious right - with the result that Mr Dole changed his mind again and accepted the money.



Rescue workers search for survivors after an avalanche on Mount Cotopaxi, Ecuador, the highest active volcano in the world, at 5,897 metres. Local reports said 30 people had been buried in the snow; nine were confirmed dead

Photograph: Claudia Daut

Suspect's brother agonised over Unabomber

JOHN CARLIN
Washington

David Kaczynski agonised for more than six months before alerting the FBI to his suspicions that his brother, Theodore, arrested last Wednesday in Montana on charges of possessing explosives, might be the notorious Unabomber whose letter-

bombs have killed three people and injured 23 across America over the past 18 years.

Tony Bisceglie, the Kaczynski family lawyer, said yesterday that David Kaczynski first began to suspect his brother last summer after reading accounts of the locations where the bombs had been mailed. In September, however, his fears

were amplified with the publication in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* of a manifesto by the Unabomber.

"David Kaczynski read the manifesto with the idea that he would be able to immediately discount any connection between his brother and the Unabomber," Mr Bisceglie said. "Unfortunately, when he read

the manifesto, he was unable to do that."

In October, driven by a very sincere desire to ensure that no further lives were lost", David Kaczynski gathered samples of his brother's writings and consulted experts who "concluded that there was a significant probability that that the manifesto and these writings were

written by the same individual," Mr Bisceglie said. He added that David had gone through "a great deal of anguish" before deciding to report his brother.

"This is a very loving family."

The FBI was said yesterday to be accumulating evidence to upgrade the charge against Theodore Kaczynski from possession of explosives to murder.

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obituaries/gazette

Professor Brian Abel-Smith

Some great people are insufficiently appreciated in their lifetime – and among them are those who avoid the limelight quite deliberately. Brian Abel-Smith matched sheer brilliance with genuine modesty.

His contributions to government, international health and health services, politics and social policy read like the considerable careers of four separate people, equally intriguing and full of influence and vitality.

It was the National Health Service which earned his particular devotion. He did more than anyone to acquaint others with the reasons for its existence – and how it had to be adapted to new circumstances. His books on *The Cost of the Health Service in England and Wales* (with Richard Titmuss), 1956; *A History of the Nursing Profession*, 1960; *Paying for Health Services*, 1963; *The Hospitals 1800-1948*, 1964; established a formidable case for a comprehensive public service and are still among the best things any student can read. He was a member of different government committees defending – but developing – the NHS.

The flow of work on health services continued throughout the 1970s to the 1990s: *An International Study of Health Expenditure*, 1967; *Value for Money in Health Services*, 1976; *National Health Service: the first 30 years*, 1978; *The Organisation, Financing and Cost of Health Care in the European Community*, 1979; *Planning the Future of the Health Sector*, 1989; and *An Introduction to Health Policy, Planning and Financing*, 1994. This work on health became vigorously cross-national. He was employed part-time by the World Health Organisation from 1957 onwards, and his contributions to health services in Europe and poor countries outside Europe, starting in Mauritius and continuing until, most lately, in Indonesia, made him more influential elsewhere than in his own country.

I came to know him first as someone who was apparently an aristocrat with royal connections (at the time he was said to be 27th in line to the throne) and who happened to be writing a PhD on health at Cambridge University. During those early years he also wrote a paper on

the definition of poverty. I was writing independently at the same time, and interviewing scores of families, on the same subject. These two interests brought us together and remained dominant in our lives for the next 40 years.

His contributions to government are less well known than to academic social science and for that reason especially intriguing. Both of us had joined the Fabian Society (begun in the 1880s by Shaw, Wells and others to plan socialist policies), and sought to give it more socialist purpose. We wrote a pamphlet, "New Pensions for the Old", on the future of pensions in 1955 and were invited by the Labour politician Dick Crossman to join himself and Richard Titmuss, one of the formative influences on the post-war Welfare State, to prepare a new Labour Party plan for national superannuation, which was published in 1957 and endorsed at the Party's annual conference.

Richard Titmuss had the policy judgement and I had some of the sociological knowledge of family living conditions, but Brian Abel-Smith had the economic skill and dexterity to make this a visionary as well as a politically-appealing document. Hugh Gaitskell, sceptical of Crossman, asked his most dependable expert on the economy, Tony Crosland, to check it out.

I recall evenings in Vincent Square, Westminster, lolling on armchairs, each trying (and Abel-Smith successfully) to outwit Crosland's command of the vernacular as well as of the economic technicalities. There were sparkling exchanges, few amendments needed to be made. Crosland reported back satisfied. We all learned of the benefits to be derived from producing planning documents early, and subjecting them to merciless scrutiny.

Abel-Smith had been picked out in the 1950s by Hugh Dalton, former Chancellor of the Exchequer, as someone with a potentially glittering political future. Few of us had any doubt about his capacity for leadership in the Treasury. He refused to apply for safe seats, more because of the risk of public humiliation if he was discovered to be homosexual than anything else. I have always wondered

The sequel, *In Search of Justice*



Abel-Smith established a formidable case for a comprehensive health service

(1968), went on to show the failings of the legal system as a social service and, had he got the attention it deserved, might have led to some of the root and branch changes which are now all too obviously needed.

His wit could be disconcerting, and could be applied with devastating, but also fundamentally constructive, effects. Once he unravelled Florence Nightingale's reputation (whom he also revered) before a group of Nightingale nurses. They were never the same again. Deeply radical people have an ability to analyse figures who are almost mythical and turn them into recognisable human beings.

Along with Barbara Wootton he is a relatively neglected cre-

ative genius of post-war social policy in Britain. Perhaps this is because he was both distinguished social scientist and politician *manqué*. Perhaps it is because he was unreservedly loyal to Richard Titmuss and the department at LSE which played such a big part in the analysis of the maturing Welfare State. He lacked envy and had that inner strength which allowed his private life to be rich indeed – as friends discovered in marvelling at his gardening and culinary skills. These were both built hugely on his stable home with John Sarbatt – a marvellous foil to his appreciation of human strength and frailty and a force which enabled both to match

private strength with public worth.

Peter Townsend

Brian Abel-Smith, social scientist and government policy adviser: born London 6 November 1926; Assistant Lecturer in Social Science, LSE 1955-57; Lecturer 1957-61; Reader in Social Administration, London University (at LSE) 1961-65; Professor of Social Administration 1965-91; consultant and adviser, World Health Organisation 1967-96; Special Adviser to Secretary of State for Social Services 1968-70, 1974-78; to Secretary of State for the Environment 1978-79; Adviser to the Commissioner for Social Affairs 1977-80; died London 4 April 1996.

Gordon Clough



Clough: a big beautiful voice

Gordon Clough was one of the founders of modern radio journalism.

An early member of the elite stable of *The World At One* under Andrew Boyle and William Hardcastle, he deployed wide learning (lightly), acute journalism and a beautiful baritone voice from the presenter's chair of *The World At One*, *PM*, and *The World This Weekend*, from the 1970s to the early Nineties.

A scholarship boy from Bolton School, he read French and Russian at Magdalen College, Oxford. After "bobbing about in a boat on the Baltic" listening in to Soviet radio traffic during National Service, he joined the BBC's Russian Service and was banned from entering the Soviet Union as an alleged former spy. He was to overcome that calamity later in his career.

In 1968 he joined mainstream radio journalism and soon made his mark, particularly in *The World This Weekend*, where he thrived by interviewing politicians reflectively, even ruminatively, years before the political interview had become a commonplace of weekend broadcasting.

At first meeting his guests were often surprised to see that the owner of the big beautiful voice was a small scruffy man, and Gordon Clough exuded a vulnerability that made some of the most unlikely people want to protect him.

Summoned to Chequers to interview the Prime Minister in the early-Eighties, Clough was stunned to see Mrs Thatcher with her back to him, and saying: "Come Gordon, sit by me" – and honouring him with a stiff

whisky when the interview was over.

By the late 1980s the pathfinding *World At One* tradition had long become orthodoxy and this was probably enough for Clough to begin to tire of the presenter's chair. He started to grumble that too many programmes were chasing the same political story too hard and too long; the variety of life was lost.

It was then that he made his providential self-discovery. Already a writer of some of the most eloquent – and the longest – sentences since Gibbon, he became a wonderful reporter in his mid-fifties.

His opportunity was the Gorbachev revolution. Unbanned, he returned to the crumbling Soviet Union to make four of the finest series of documentary journalism the BBC produced at the time, *Revolution Without Show* (1987), *The Indissoluble Union* (1989), *Death of a Superpower* (1991) and *Ashes of Empire* (1991); he also won two Sony awards. With his fluent Russian Clough caught history on the wing, capturing the

Brian Walker

Arthur Gordon Clough, radio journalist: born Salford, Lancashire 26 August 1934; married 1959 Carolyn Stafford (one son, three daughters); died London 6 April 1996.

Dr Stephen Pheasant

Stephen Pheasant was an internationally-renowned ergonomist, a gifted and best-selling academic author and an accomplished jazz musician.

Pheasant was raised in Lington, London, before going up to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, to read Medical Science in 1968. His contemporaries there will perhaps remember him best for his passion for jazz and his role in taking the musically-based

shows *Stoney Ground* and *Maka Me, Make You to the Edinburgh Fringe* in consecutive years. His earlier experience with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra and the inspiration of his hero Charlie Parker no doubt influenced him to form, subsequently, the Steve Pheasant Quintet which played every Friday at the White Hart Inn, Drury Lane, in central London, from the mid 1970s to the early 1980s.

Students of his at the Royal Free Hospital and University College, London, where he lectured for many years in Anatomy, Biomechanics and Ergonomics, the scientific study of people and work, could rarely have encountered a more exceptional communicator. His ability to conceptualise and then project complex biomechanical functions in a suitable mode for student learning was testimony to his inspired education and scholarship.

He followed with keen interest the progress of the ergonomists he helped train and was always free to discuss research issues. His academic and textbook publications were recognised for their application and clarity, a talent acknowledged through the 1974 award,

sponsored by the *New Scientist* magazine, for writing about ergonomics, a gifted and best-selling academic author and an accomplished jazz musician.

Pheasant died on 30 March 1996, Nice, France.

Stephen Pheasant, ergonomist: born London 30 March 1949; died Nice, France 30 March 1996.

Sacha Rabinovitch

Sacha Rabinovitch, known to some people as the mother of the distinguished novelist, playwright and critic Gabriel Josipovici, was a gifted and fascinating literary figure in her own right.

She and her son had an exceptionally close and loving relationship, unusual in this day and age – conventional people spoke behind their hands of toward influence. But Rabinovitch, like her son, scorned the conventions. These two strong, austere but generous and affectionate characters, always respectful of each other's autonomy and creativity, lived together in a mutual support system, personal and professional.

The son's brilliance may have outshone the mother's in terms of primary output, but she was never in his shadow. Both spoke their minds and were the first to detect a weakness in a piece of writing or an argument of the other.

In terms of Jewish ethno-cultural origins, Sacha Rabinovitch was an unusual mixture. Her mother's family were Cattanui, members of the Cairo Jewish elite, some of whom could trace their ancestry back 2,000 years through rabbinic lines – or so the wife of Edmond Jabès, herself a Cattanui and a cousin of Rabinovitch, told me. (Our respective views on the importance of Edmond Jabès as a writer led to one of the few major disagreements between myself and Sacha Rabinovitch).

Rabinovitch's maternal grandfather was from Ferrara and, like Jabès himself, Sacha Rabinovitch had an Italian passport. But her father was an Ashkenazi Jew, a Russian doctor from Odessa who had settled in Cairo after fighting in the Russo-Japanese war. She had TB as a child, which doubtless accounted for her spare and wiry frame, but she survived – to marry Jean Josipovici in 1934. Jean's father Albert had written a novel, *Goha le simple*, famous in its time, which was shortlisted for the Prix Goncourt the year Marcel Proust won it – 1919.

They moved to France, to Aix, where they met the novelist Jean Giono while doing post-graduate work. In Vence they associated with André Gide. Later on, as Jews, it was obvious that they would have to leave Europe. The last possible passage back to Egypt was due to set sail on 8 October 1940. But Rabinovitch's son was born that day... What is more, her husband had gone off with someone else, and thus she found herself alone with Gabriel, and in a very dangerous situation.

But in 1943, with the help of friends they made for La Bourboule, a spa town in the Dordogne, where Gabriel remembered her carving him wooden toys, and wooden letters so he could learn to read. A visit from her husband eventually resulted in the birth of a daughter, but the child died five weeks later.

After the war was over, Sacha and Gabriel finally made it back to Egypt, where she worked at and he attended an English-style public school – Victoria College, alma mater of King Hussein and Edward Said. But even before the Suez crisis many Jews felt they had to leave Egypt. Rabinovitch's dream anyway was that Gabriel

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Anthony Rudolf

Sacha Rabinovitch, translator and poet: born Cairo 9 December 1910; married 1934 Jean Josipovici (one son and one daughter deceased; marriage dissolved); died Brighton 23 March 1996.

Olga Rudge

I don't believe that Allen Ginsberg was quite the welcome guest to the Pound / Rudge household that Peter Russell suggests, at least not as far as Ezra Pound was concerned.

After the war was over, Sacha and Gabriel finally made it back to Egypt, where she worked at and he attended an English-style public school – Victoria College, alma mater of King Hussein and Edward Said. But even before the Suez crisis many Jews felt they had to leave Egypt. Rabinovitch's dream anyway was that Gabriel

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Ezra Pound was concerned, further to the obituary of 25 March, I distinctly remember her telling me how Ginsberg, of whom she said, neither of them had heard, encamped outside their house near Rapallo with some friends, started to make extraordinary wailing noises (apparently Hare Krishna chants in American accents) and refused to go away to see them. In other words, Ezra Pound only saw him in order to get rid of him. It made Rudge angry when people said that Ginsberg had been a friend of Pound's.

After Pound died in 1972, Rudge remained alone in Venice and was a familiar sight

there walking slowly through the streets wearing a white hat, white coat, white-rimmed owl-like dark glasses, and using a white umbrella as a walking stick.

I knew her only towards the end of her life. I met her in 1987 when she was 92 (I was 24), but even then, and even when I last saw her when she was 98, she was still full of the extraordinary energy and enthusiasm of which Russell speaks, and usually had a beaming smile on her face.

The first time I met her was at a lecture given in Venice on the last night of the carnival. On leaving everyone told her that she should take the back route home to avoid being knocked over by the noisy, boisterous people singing and dancing in the crowded streets. "But it is precisely those people dancing and singing that I want to see," she replied, and off she went.

Wills
Mr Simon Dyes, of Kew, Surrey, Director-General of the AA since 1987, left estate valued at £579,846 net.

Mr Elsie Price, the art lecturer, of Bath, left estate valued at £223 net.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

LIDDELL: On 3 April 1996, to Chloe (née Berlin) and David, a son, Rupert Henry, a brother to Freya. Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering service), 0171-293 2012 or fax 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £1.50 + 1 line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

37: Mr Alan Knott, cricketer, 50; Mr Tom Lehrer, songwriter and lecturer, 68; Mr Peter Moores, former chairman, Littlewoods, 64; The Right Rev Gerald Moylever, Roman Catholic Bishop of Hallum, 74; Mr William O'Brien, former chairman, 75; Sir Michael O'Dwyer, QC, 70; Sir Michael Palmer, former Head of the Diplomatic Service, 74; Mr Carl Perkins, rock singer and guitarist, 64; Sir Michael Richardson, Vice-Chairman, I.O. Hanbury Matson & Co, 71; Mr Martin Rogers, director, Farmington Institute, for Christian Studies, 65; Professor Richard Rose, Professor of Public Policy, Sunybake, 63; Mr Tony Silcock, midshipwright, 63; Miss Valerie Singleton, broadcaster, 59; Sir Michael Somare, first prime minister of Papua New Guinea, 60; Mr Glenn F. Tilson, chairman, Texaco, 48; Professor David Walker QC, Emeritus Professor of Law, Glasgow University, 76; Sir Richard Young, former chairman, Boots, 82.

Anniversaries

Births: James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, 1649; Theobald Bohm, flautist and composer, 1794; Ginevra Pasta (Negrini), soprano, 1798; Isambard Kingdom Brunel, engineer, 1806; Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, poet, 1821; Leopold II, King of the Belgians, 1835; Sir Francisco Paolo Tosti, composer, 1847; Sir Charles Mawdry, painter and etcher, 1861; Ernst Friedrich Wilhelm von Liedtendorff, general and politician, 1865; Charles Proteus Steinmetz, electrical engineer, 1868; Isabella II, Queen of Spain, 1864; Charles Conder, artist, 1879; Efrém Zimbalist, violinist, 1889; Paul Bustill Robeson, actor and singer, 1898; Ward Bond, actor, 1903; Hugh Todd Naylor, statesman, 1906; Victor Vasarely, Op Art painter, 1906; Sir Robert Murray Headlam, dinner, 1909; Deacon Edward IV, King of England, 1463; Lorenzo de' Medici ("The Magnificent"), 1492; François Rabelais, author, 1553; François Bacon, Viscount St Albans, statesman, 1626; Simon Fraser, 12th Baron Lovat, Jacobite, last man to be hanged in England, 1747; Jacques Necker, financier and statesman, 1804; John Opie, infant painter, 1805; Charles Rossetti, poet and Pre-Raphaelite painter, 1828; Isabella II, Queen of Spain, 1864; Charles Conder, artist, 1879; Efrém Zimbalist, violinist, 1889; Paul Bustill Robeson, actor and singer, 1898; Ward Bond, actor, 1903; Hugh Todd Naylor, statesman, 1906; Victor Vasarely, Op Art painter, 1906; Sir Robert Murray Headlam, dinner, 1909; Deacon Edward IV, King of England, 1463; Lorenzo de' Medici ("The Magnificent"), 1492; François Rabelais, author, 1553; François Bacon, Viscount St Albans, statesman, 1626; Simon Fraser, 12th Baron Lovat, Jacobite, last man to be hanged in England, 1747; Jacques Necker, financier and statesman, 1804; John Opie, infant painter, 1805;

Rabinovitch

JPK in 1996

essay

My father, my son

When the BBC journalist Fergal Keane became a father, he wrote a letter to his new son. His relationship with his own father had been deeply troubled. Here we publish his letter to Daniel Patrick and another to his dead father



Dear father

Dublin, New Year's Day 1972
Behind the bedroom door you are sleeping, I can hear your snores rattling down the stairs to our ruined sitting room. Here among the broken chairs, the overturned Christmas tree, we are preparing to leave you. We are breaking away from you. Da.

Last night you crashed through the silence, dead drunk and spinning in your own wild orbit into another year of dreams. This would be the year of the big break – of Hollywood, you said. Oh my actor father, time was, time was, we swallowed those lines – but no longer.

Before leaving I look into the bedroom to where your hand drops out from under the covers, below it the small empty Powers' bottle, and I say goodbye.

And at seven o'clock on New Year's Day we push the old Ford Anglia down the driveway – my mother, brother and I. We push because the engine might wake you, and none of us can face a farewell scene. I don't know what the neighbours think, if anything, when they see a woman and two small boys stealing away in the grey morning, but I don't care, we're heading south with everything we own.

The day I turned 12, which was four days later, you called to say Happy Birthday. You were, as I remember, half-way sober, but you didn't say much else, except to ask for my mother, who would not come to the phone.

In the background I could hear glasses clinking, voices raised, and you said: "Tell her I love her," and then the change ran out, and I began to understand what made love the saddest word in any language.

Christmas that year and you had access to the children. We met in Cork station. I remember your new suit, your embarrassed embrace, the

money you pressed into our hands, and the smell of whisky. We found a taxi and the driver stared at us, throwing his eyes to heaven and shaking his head.

What I see now are many such faces: the waitress at the Old Bridge Café where drinks were spilled; the couple who asked for an autograph and watched your shaking hand struggle to write, before they beat a mortified retreat.

And on through pubs and bookie shops to one last café where Elvis was crooning "Love Me Tender, Love Me Sweet," on an ancient radio, by now, nobody able to speak.

There was a taxi ride home, we children in the back, you in the front, and what lives with me still, always, is the moment of leave taking, Christmas 1972. Because as the car drove away from our lives I saw through the steamed-up windows that your eyes had become waterfalls.

I was too young to understand what you knew – we were lost to you, broken away. Down the years we struggled to find one another, but I was growing up and away, and you were drifting closer to darkness. And at the end I gave up writing, gave up calling. I gave up.

Until one night my cousin called to say you were gone. It was a few days after Christmas, and your heart simply gave up in a small room in the town in north Kerry where you were born. I remember that you sent me the collected stories of Raymond Carver for Christmas. I had sent you nothing, not even a card. Now I would send you a thousand but I have no address.

Fergal

This message will be broadcast tonight at 11.30pm on Radio 4

My dear son

Hong Kong
It is six o'clock in the morning. You are asleep, cradled in my left arm, and I am learning the art of one-handed typing. Your mother, more tired, yet more happy than I've ever known her, is sound asleep in the room next door. Since you've arrived, days have melted into night and back again.

When you're older we'll tell you that you were born in Britain's last Asian colony in the lunar year of the pig and that when we brought you home, the staff of our apartment block gathered to wish you well. Your mother and I have wanted you and waited for you, imagined you and dreamed about you, and now that you are here, no dream can do justice to you.

We have called you Daniel Patrick. Your coming has turned me upside down and inside out. So much that seemed essential to me has, in the past few days, taken on a different colour. Like many foreign correspondents I know I have lived a life that on occasion has veered close to the edge: war zones, natural disasters, darkness in all its shapes and forms.

In a world of insecurity and ambition and ego it's easy to be drawn in to take chances with our lives, to believe that what we do and what people say about it is reason enough to gamble with death. Now looking at your sleeping face, inches away from me, listening to your occasional sigh and gurgle, I wonder how I could have ever thought glory and prizes and praise were sweeter than life.

And it's also true that I am pained, perhaps haunted, by a better word, by the memory, suddenly so vivid now, of each suffering child I have come across on my journeys. Looking at you, the images come flooding back.

Ten-year-old Ani Mikail dying from napalm

burns on a hillside in Eritrea, how his voice cried out, growing ever more faint when the wind blew dust onto his wounds.

The two brothers, Domingo and Justo in Menongue, southern Angola. Justo, three years old and blind, dying from malnutrition, being carried on 10-year-old Domingo's back. And Domingo's words to me: "He was nice before, but now he has the hunger."

There is one last memory, of Rwanda, and the churchyard of the parish of Nyarabuye,

Looking at your sleeping face, I wonder how I could ever have thought glory was sweeter than life

where, in a ransacked classroom, I found a mother and her three young children huddled together where they had been beaten to death. The children had died holding onto their mother, that instant we all learn from birth and in one way or another cling to until we die.

Daniel, these memories explain some of the fierce protectiveness I feel for you, the occasional moments of blind terror when I imagine anything happening to you. But there is something more, a story from long ago that I will tell you face to face, father to son, when you are older.

It begins 35 years ago in a big city on a January morning with snow on the ground and a woman walking to hospital to have her first baby. She is in her early twenties and the city is

still strange to her, bigger and noisier than the easy streets and gentle hills of her distant home. She's walking because there is no money and everything of value has been pawned to pay for the alcohol to which her husband has become addicted.

On the way a taxi driver notices her sitting exhausted and cold in the doorway of a shop and he takes her to hospital for free. Later that day she gives birth to a baby boy and just as you are to me, he is the best thing she has ever seen. Her husband comes that night and weeps with joy when he sees his son. He is truly happy. Hungover, broke, but in his own way happy, for they were both young and in love with each other, and their son.

But the cancer of alcoholism ate away at the man and he lost his family. This was not something he meant to do or wanted to happen, it just was. By the time his son had grown up, the man lived away from his family, on his own in a one-roomed flat, living and dying for the bottle. His son was too far away to hear his last words, his final breath, and all the things they might have wished to say to one another were left unspoken.

Yet, Daniel, when you let out your first powerful cry in the delivery room and I became a father, I thought of your grandfather, and, foolish though it may seem, hoped that in some way he could hear, across the infinity between the living and the dead, your proud statement of arrival. For if he could hear, he would recognise the distinct voice of the family, the sound of hope and new beginnings that you and all your innocence and freshness have brought to the world.

Fergal

DIARY

Have they got an ordeal for him?

I was surprised to see David Ashby, Tory MP for North West Leicestershire, among the guest celebs in the next series of *Have I Got News For You?*

Since losing his libel case against the *Sunday Times*, in which he was branded a homosexual, a hypocrite and a liar, he lost his temper on *Kilroy* during a discussion about press intrusion and misrepresentation.

Has he ever actually watched *Have I Got News For You?* As Paula Yates or Roy Hattersley will inform him, it has a penchant for targeting the weak spots of its guests. And, as a central allegation made in the *Sunday Times* was that he shared a bed with a male friend in France, the thoughts of the show's producer, Colin Swash, show he will need a sense of humour. "We are very hopeful that he will appear," says Mr Swash. "If he does he will be sharing his desk with another man."

However, Mr Ashby's faith in human nature seems undaunted. "The programme's not a political programme, is it?" he asked me. "It's a bit of laugh isn't it? I'm looking forward to an enjoyable occasion."

So are we.

Traitor's secrets betrayed at last

This summer the Government will release secret papers relating to the original Lord Haw-Haw, Norman Ballie-Stewart, who actually preceded the better-known traitor William Joyce in the *Germany Calling* radio broadcasts during the Second World War, died in June 1966. And the Home Office is

now prepared to make public information about him. It should make a riveting read. The former lieutenant in the Seaforth Highlanders was twice accused of betraying his country – once for selling secrets to the Germans for £90 in 1933 (he claimed a 22-year-old blonde German woman gave him the money in return for his making love to her in a Berlin park.) He was sent to the Tower of London, where the same officer took exercise in front of scores of women who had queued to see him parade in full Highland dress escorted by an armed Coldstream Guards officer.

The second trial was shortly after the war – he was charged with aiding the enemy and sentenced to five years. Compared with Joyce he seems to have got off lightly and ended up a success and misrepresentation.

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So are we.

Brain food for humans and turtles

The cynical side of the story is that Dennis Boyce, the chairman of the London Zoo Board, who recently gave a speech at the Audit Commission, is sending pictures of his son to the *Times*, *Guardian* and *Telegraph*, pausing only to tell me it's a bit of a touchy matter. But the zoo board chairman and his son are not the only ones who feel this is not the case. The 12-week-old Sumatran orangutan, called Fergal, is fiercely loyal to this newspaper, apparently.

The director of the London Zoo, Dr Grahame, adds: "Our latest conservation success needed to be publicised and could not be done with

successful businessman in Ireland, designing a ship for the Harland and Wolff yard. On the other hand, he may have felt a little hard done by at his first court martial, where he was described as a "pathological case with a fixation for German women" – not known to be a crime in peace time.

Scots lean a little to the left

A conference in Glasgow tomorrow will be told that the Scots and the English share common values. One of the few differences that emerges in a British Rights Survey is that the Scots are 8 per cent more likely to identify

themselves as being on the political left. Otherwise, says Professor Bill Miller of Glasgow University, the differences are "small but interesting". That will bring joy to the heart of Labour's Robin Cook, who is on the left of the party and Scottish and small and interesting.

Milking the situation

A reader telephones to tell me to stop referring to mad cows. They are quadrupeds with churning difficulties. I shall endeavour to remember that.

Mr Darcy unloved? Surely not

Appear in *Pride and Prejudice* and die. This was the improbable claim last week from the actor Colin Firth, of virile breeches fame. Journalists at an awards ceremony heard him wail: "I have worked solidly for 12 years, but after *Pride and Prejudice*, it just went quiet." Could this really be so? Well, actually, no. A quick check confirms that, since playing Mr Darcy, Firth went straight on to do a BBC adaptation of Conrad's novel, *Nostromo*, in South America, then a film in Rome and assorted other projects.

"He must," reassures a BBC spokesman, "just have been feeling a little modest, that's all." Of course, cynics among us might suggest he was catching a quick headline for his new lead role in Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch*. And there was I, thinking it a truth universally acknowledged that a man in possession of A-list sex symbol status was not in need of publicity stunts.

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Taxing times for Labour

A generation ago under Harold Wilson, devaluation was the great unmentionable for Labour. For Tony Blair, compulsory mouth-washing is ordered for anyone who mentions the "T" word, taxes. John Smith, so party lore has it, lost the 1992 election for Labour by promising increases in income tax and National Insurance. This time round the fiscal silence has been deafening. You have to listen very hard to hear any Labour tax talk. What is audible is moderate in the extreme. Most of the tax-paying population will sleep easy if Blair is voted in Number 10.

It seems, therefore, strange that KPMG should be telling its clients hair-raising tales of Tony's terrible tax take and telling them to decamp, or dispatch their funds, to foreign climes. KPMG is a reputable firm of accountants and consultants. It has prospered under the Tories and probably would do so under Labour. Either KPMG has had sight of deeply socialistic schemes unknown to the rest of us or it is engaging in scare tactics that leave it looking like Conservative Central Office's errand boy. This is an odd position for a company that recently published a damning calculation of the tax burden under the Tories.

Anyone with assets or the prospect of a future income stream should plan. Planning includes anticipating taxes and may require shifting money between portfolios.

Diplomatic salvo

In the Korean peninsula order takes the form of a armed truce. History dictates that the Stalinist period piece in the North must fall or transmute into something more like a modern pluralist state. But Pyongyang thwarts history. The regime, part oriental despotism, part totalitarian bureaucracy, obeys its own logic. The country is sliding further from the path of development. Floods have left it hungry and debilitated. The response ought to be a softening of its hard diplomatic lines. Yet this week could be one of the tensest in a decade. Soldiers from the North have repeatedly entered the Demilitarised Zone, violating the Armistice which ended the Korean War.

Washington has kept cool. The North cannot mobilise artillery without being observed. Allied forces have at least a day's warning of war. But does the North want armed conflict? There may be a diplomatic rationale – unless it is some half-baked attempt to emulate recent Chi-

inese pressure on Taiwan, for there are national assembly elections in South Korea this week and, as in Taiwan, relations with the Communists are an issue. These military demonstrations may be the diplomatic gesturing of a regime that cannot talk in conventional language. Destroying the armistice may be a scorched-earth policy. If there is no armistice, there has to be a permanent agreement.

What the North Koreans want is the wherewithal to keep the country going, having made minimum political concessions. They seem to want a bilateral treaty with the US that would permit trade and aid to flow to the North. The US has abiding obligations to the South but must also think about north-east Asian security. Dealing with North Korea is like treating a cunning psychopath. But sometimes even psychopaths are worth talking to, provided straitjackets are in place, the windows barred and the guards armed.

Thin excuses for GPs

The wide freedom British doctors have to prescribe medicines is founded on a rigorous procedure for assessing their safety before launch. Where the system is less robust is in follow-up. Who prescribes, when, and how attentively to the general state of the patient? In theory doctors are policed not only by the General Medical Council but by informal peer pressures and exchange of views in periodicals. But with so-called slimming pills the system seems to have broken down. Women have died and alarm bells should have been ringing long and loud.

These drugs have a role, though not uncontroversial, in treating obesity. The immediate question is their misuse. There is evidence that doctors are prescribing them as "get the patient off my back" drugs. Some doctors seem to have an attitude that is little better than quackery.

Culture prefers certain body shapes. Fat gets a consistently bad press. Many, many women want to be thinner. Some of them allow their weight to become a source of anxiety. Much of the \$1bn-a-year slimming industry does no harm, though it probably does little good either. But there is a segment of the market that is irresponsible and has to be curbed.

The Department of Health has had slimming pills under review for some time, but seems to have been dilatory about doing anything. It now has to hand an expert report, which must not be ignored. One option is licensing slimming clinics. But the medical profession needs to act quickest. Exemplary disciplinary action against doctors who have mis-prescribed these drugs would remind all GPs that no drug should be given to a patient without energetic parallel efforts to track side effects and outcomes.

The not necessarily the news quiz

How well do you think you keep up with the news? Think you're as much in touch with the headlines as Trevor Macdonald? Then see how well you do with this test! All you have to do is read the following recent news stories and say which ones are false and which are true.

1. At the weekend, some members of the Royal Family made a bid for freedom after breaking out of Windsor Castle but were swiftly rounded up by a trained pack of polo ponies stationed nearby.

2. The world's first libel case has arisen from use of the Internet. A registered Internet user in Britain fed in some highly damaging information about Rupert Murdoch's organisation News International and he is being sued for libel by Murdoch in America. The defence that the libel, if any, took place in Britain is being discounted by Murdoch's lawyers, who say that a writ for libel can be issued anywhere that the libel was uttered and that means, in the case of the Internet, anywhere. The case will create a new precedent in international law.

3. The Tory party has tried, and failed, to insure itself against losing the next general election. No reputable insurance company will take the business. Only Lloyds has shown



MILES KINGTON

an interest, and has asked for certain conditions which even the Tory party has felt unable to agree to.

4. The oldest living war criminal has been found. Ernst Jungfer, who is 102 years old and living quietly in Munich, has been identified as the very same Ernst Jungfer who has been sought for atrocities committed in the last year of the 1914-1918 war, when he was 24 years old. He is the only known war criminal still wanted from the Great War. Although he may not have committed any atrocities himself, he is, as the oldest survivor, now responsible for anything done by anyone on the German side. A trial may be difficult, as there are no surviving witnesses, and Jungfer himself cannot remember anything about the First World War at all, or indeed anything about the Second World War, though he can remember every sin-

gle episode of Dallas, which is not in itself a crime.

5. A stable of polo ponies stationed at Windsor stamped over the weekend, following a visit by the Duchess of York in her new, stark, white-faced image. "The ponies knew her well in her old guise," said a palace spokesman, "but they seem to have freaked out when they saw this thing coming towards them. All is well now, as Fergie is back under lock and key and is being calmed down."

6. The new mystery majority shareholder in the Internet has now been identified as Rupert Murdoch. He is quoted as saying that he didn't realise till his recent Internet libel case just how powerful this new medium was, and he intends to take it over before he gets too tired-looking and haggard. He intends to issue two electronic newspapers on the Net, called the *Daily E-Mail* and *E-Mail on Sunday*.

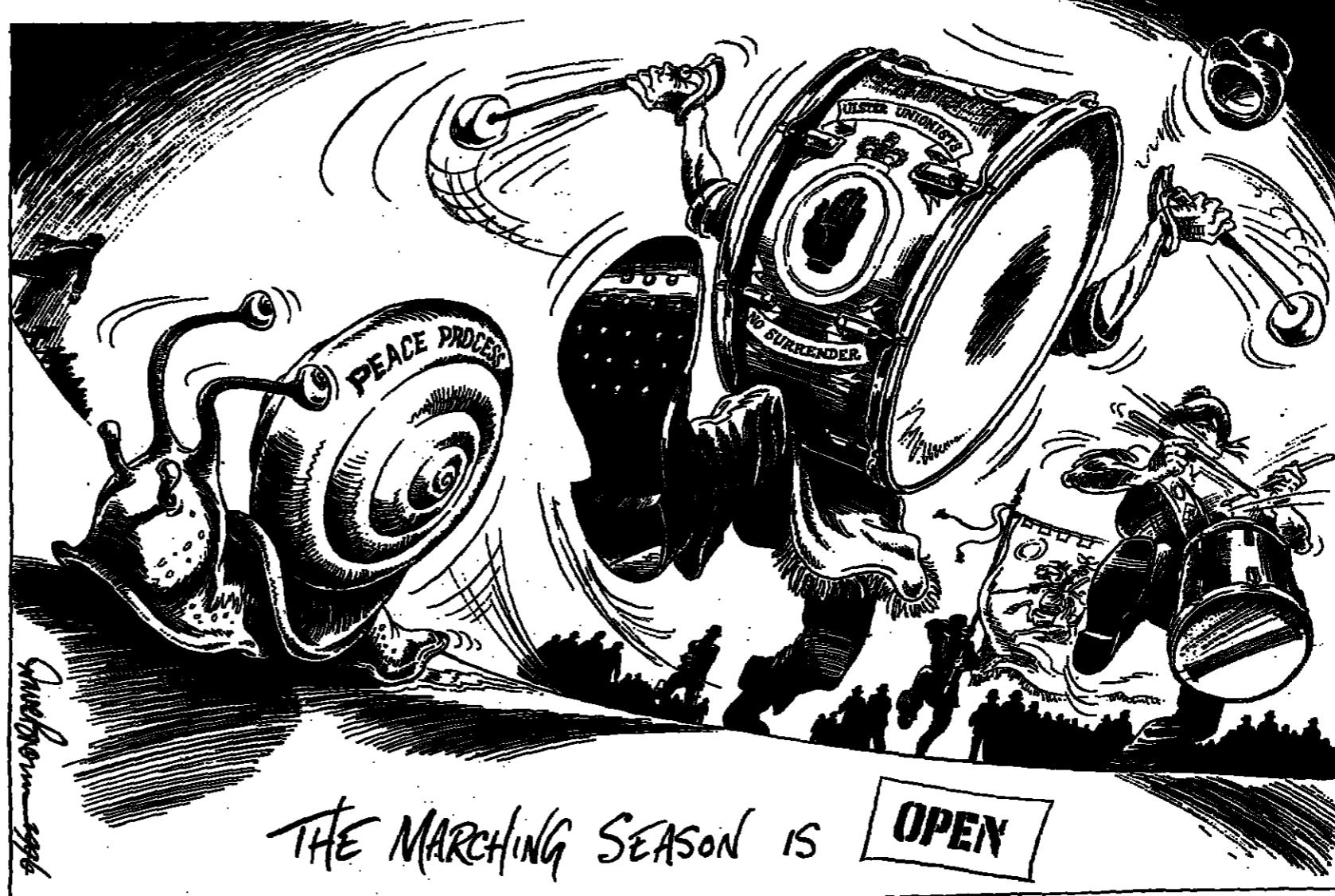
7. A new one-day cricketing record has been created by Sri Lanka, when their opening batsman, Jayasinha, hit a century off the first ball – and was out as well. Under the bright stadium lights, the ball went missing under the umpire's feet and the opening pair ran 107 runs before it was found. But while he was trying to

complete the 108th run, he was run out.

8. The Government's strategy for the general election is, it is being confidently reported, to make a huge amount of money for the Tory party by placing large amounts with the bookmakers on a Labour victory. "I don't see how we can fail," says a spokesman from under a large brown paper bag. "All we have to do is introduce large tax increases at the last moment and Bob's your uncle."

9. Damian Hurst, the controversial artist, has been accused of going commercial after unveiling his latest work, entitled "A String of Polo Ponies Pursued by the Royal Family, at Night". To create it, he had to set 60 or 70 polo ponies free at night and get the Royal Family out after them, in their night wear and gum boots, "which took a lot of organising. I can tell you", says his agent. But art critics say that this newest work is going right down market, and they point to the rave coverage it got in the *Sun*.

The answer is that, yes, it is true that Trevor McDonald is related to the founder of McDonald's and will not read out any news item criticising the hamburger chain. All the rest are false.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Africa fights on to save elephants from poachers

Sir: It is now seven years since the 1989 ban on the ivory trade but according to Richard Lloyd Parry's article ("Japan adds its voice to scrapping ivory ban", 2 April), the remaining stocks will last for the next five or six years. This suggests that there was stockpiling and perhaps an unnecessary slathering of additional elephants.

In the past, ivory from poached elephants has found its way into the market and even now there is really no mechanism in the supplying or receiving countries to deal with the problem.

It is true that the ban has not altogether stopped poaching and the illegal trade, but lifting it will only fuel them. The ban on sight of any ivory transaction creates no

doubt in anybody's mind that it is illegal. Without it poachers and their friends can cover their tracks. The attempt to lift the ban would have been a little more convincing if Africa's elephant population were rising rapidly rather than the present situation of low but stable numbers.

Maintain the ban and save the elephant for posterity.

MWANYENGELA NGALI
High Commissioner
Kenya High Commission
London W1

Sir: In your article "Japan adds its voice to scrapping ivory ban" (2 April), there were a number of misleading points.

Only four countries in Africa

oppose the ivory ban. Around 30 countries are in favour of it and, in fact, more have become so since its positive effects began to be felt. To say that Japan "adds its voice" is to imply a growing chorus of dissent, which is far from the truth. Zimbabwe and Namibia have now lost another ally: South Africa has just announced that it will not be applying to have its elephants removed from the protected list, while Zambia left them behind in 1992.

You state that "African officials believe that the ban encourages poaching". Surveys undertaken in the past three years show huge support among African officials for the ivory ban, and clear evidence that it has reduced poaching almost everywhere and stopped it altogether in some areas. The grossly outnumbered anti-ban Zimbabwean officials are trying to persuade the world that the ban has not worked.

Your article does, however, make one thing abundantly clear: Official Japanese consumption of ivory prior to the ban stood at around 100 tonnes per year. Now craftsmen are saying that only 160 tonnes remain, which will last another five or six years. Consumption has dropped enormously since the ban.

SUSIE WATTS
Environmental Investigation
Agency
London EC1

Easter myths of Passover

Sir: Keith Botsford's gargantuan buffet of history, myth, tradition, eggs, lamb and other Easter fare ("Time to savor the feast of spring", 5 April) included a few rather indigestible morsels.

"As the Father sacrificed his son, the son became the pure, innocent Lamb of God," proclaims Botsford, "which accounts for the prime place given to lamb on Easter Day."

Well, yes and no. The "prime place given to lamb" at Easter is none other than the place it occupied for Jesus and the disciples when they celebrated Passover. In those days, at Passover each household made the journey to the Temple in Jerusalem, sacrificed a lamb, roasted it and ate it. Since the destruction of the Temple, the Passover lamb is remembered simply as a bone on the Seder plate, to which Botsford makes the fleeting and inaccurate reference.

The anti-roads battle is deeply embedded in the consciousness of Middle England – and, as with the M11 fight here in east London, it is increasingly being waged far less spectacularly by "ordinary" people revealing the lies and brutalities of the Highways Agency while lobbying hard to prevent further destruction of the little green space we have left.

And, as for the M11 and Newbury, those fights are far from over. You'll see ...

Newbury: wrong battleground for anti-road lobby

Sir:

age, the protesters have reduced the credibility of the anti-road lobby.

Their failure, noted by your

leader, to attract anywhere near the numbers of protesters the organisers had originally promised is one result of this loss of credibility. It will be a matter of great regret, to me as much as to anyone else, if the protest continues and in so doing marginalises those of us who understand the pressing need for a new integrated transport strategy for our country.

Call of nature

Sir:

You make the mistake of gauging the strength of today's road protest movement by the number of tree-climbers.

The anti-roads battle is deeply

embodied in the consciousness of Middle England – and, as with the M11 fight here in east London, it is increasingly being waged far less spectacularly by "ordinary" people revealing the lies and brutalities of the Highways Agency while lobbying hard to prevent further destruction of the little green space we have left.

The symbolic egg of Easter, which has become chocolate in modern times, was another Passover sacrifice. A burnt egg lies beside the bone on the Seder plate, and the festive Seder meal – widely assumed to have been the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples – starts with an egg in salt water. Throughout Passover, incidentally, owing to the lack of bread or leaven, egg dishes are immensely popular.

Keith Botsford mistakenly mentions a "plated loaf made with egg at Seder, the beginning of Passover". Absolutely not. Passover happens to be the only time of year when *halla* – the plated loaf made with egg – is not eaten: for this is the Festival of Matzah, unleavened bread.

Ignorance about Jews led to the routine Passion Week accusation that Jews use Christian blood for their Passover meal. These accusations made Easter the most dangerous time of year for Jews throughout the Christian world. The word "Easter" still fills many Jews with fear.

ANDREW SANGER
London NW2

Bottom-up legal settlements

Sir:

Grania Langdon-Down's

article on structured settlements (3 April) was very timely, given that this method of paying damages in a personal injury claim was given a major fillip by the Finance Act, 1995. This enabled the annuity payments to be made directly from the life insurer to the defendant insurer, effecting considerable savings in administrative costs and tax for the insurer. Further useful changes are on the way in the Damages Bill, which will shortly begin its passage through Parliament.

However, the article was somewhat misleading in suggesting that arranging a structured settlement from the bottom up, rather than the top down, is new. Both approaches have been adopted by solicitors and insurers for some time and it is arguable whether they are radically different. Generally, those advising the plaintiff will need to consider the potential size of any lump sum the plaintiff may receive, in order to be able to evaluate the advantages of resolving the claim by a lump sum, or in whole, or in part, by a structured settlement. While the bottom-up needs-based approach certainly has advantages in cases where liability is disputed, or there is an element of contributory negligence, or where life expectancy is reduced, the plaintiff certainly needs robust and independent advice on whether the annuity package on offer from the insurer is in his or her best interests.

SUZANNE BURN

Secretary, Civil Litigation

Committee

The Law Society

London WC2

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IN BRIEF

Rebel Kurds kill 100

Chechen assault

Moistener released

Last sighting

Pod, parts are

How Ambridge could join the revolution

Farmers as a breed are not given to deep introspection. They're the doers of our society rather than the thinkers, which is both their weakness and their strength. Saddle them with a system that in the eyes of most of the country has failed and they'll defend it to the bitter end.

The problem is that the average farmer has almost no conception of the earth's natural bounty. The land will deliver nothing without a good deal of coaxing from the products of Du Port and Agri-Evo. So to grow a decent cereal crop you need to start with a modern, high-yielding variety from the likes of Zeneca Seeds. Apply an autumn herbicide plus a couple of sizeable dressings of nitrogen fertiliser from Hydro Agric. Add a growth regulator or two for good measure, and nurture through the season with three or four fungicide sprays from Bayer. Finally, harvest with a 350hp, high-capacity combine from Claas.

It's not that the modern farmer employs such technical aids to enhance a natural process. In his eyes they are the process: as indispensable

GOING ORGANIC

as soil, rain and sunshine. If there remains somewhere an inherited memory of a time before agrochemicals, it's darkened by images of rural decay: of collapsed barns and gates hanging off hinges, of wheat fields choked up with weeds.

Along came ICI to save the world from all that.

The reality was somewhat different. The author H.J. Massingham, an astute commentator on rural Britain in the 1930s and 40s, warned often that the industrialisation of agriculture would lead to disaster. In his book *The Wisdom of the Fields* he writes of a wartime meeting with a couple who farmed a tiny smallholding.

On a little over four acres of steeply sloping land Mr Rose and his wife grew enough food to feed a small hamlet, all without the aid of chemicals. Their crops included strawberries - 120 lb in 1944 - potatoes, orchard fruits, plus a greater diversity of vegetables than many a grower with 400 acres of fat and level land.

In addition they grew enough

grass, fodder crops and flowers to support a pony, 130 chickens including 30 pullets, goats, six ewes and a lamb, a breeding sow with a litter of eight and 30 hives of bees. Massingham comments that their crops were of "superlative quality" and their animals in perfect health.

Husbandry such as this would feed a hundred million people when the "crazy edifice of super-industrialism" came tumbling down, he wrote.

At the end of the war there were a quarter of a million small farmers like the Rowes, each with less than 50 acres. Virtually without subsidies they had survived the depression of the 30s and 40s. Without chemical aids they had fed the nation during time of war. They were by any reckoning a national treasure.

Unfortunately the politicians, who have never understood such things, decided there was no place for a peasant culture in postwar Britain. So they introduced the disastrous subsidy system that swelled dividends to shareholders in pesticide companies and forced the true cus-

todians of the land out of business.

And here we are with an agriculture that costs us billions, a countryside stripped of its wildlife, a poisoned soil and a network of contaminated watercourses. Now they tell us our food isn't safe to eat. Something has gone horribly wrong.

In our hearts we remain a peasant people. The grandsons and granddaughters of the Rowes and their like are still out there. The land is not yet quite exhausted. It's time to start rebuilding our rural heritage.

We need to dismantle the subsidies, free up the land and get farmers producing for people again, not for the calamitous intervention store. And we must begin taxing the polluters and the destroyers of habitat.

Given clear price signals farmers will respond readily enough. For all their innate conservatism they are rapid adopters of new methods, or in this case, new old methods.

Graham Harvey

The writer is a farming journalist and scriptwriter for *The Archers*.

The consumer must be king

CHANGING MARKETS

If you want to make British agriculture green then you have to make the consumer king. That means overhauling a system of supermarkets that is uncompetitive. It means transforming an educational and labelling system that keeps people ignorant about food. We must create local markets where consumers and producers can restore their historic close relationship, which mass production and mass consumerism have destroyed.

The reality is that retailers and traders are sovereign. They mediate between production and consumer. They set the specifications, the price, even when and how the growing occurs down on the farm. Giant companies straddle the food world, competing to get value-added food and drink down our throats. Five retailers have around two thirds of the UK grocery market. A proper competition policy that put consumers first would break up these large companies.

We can have local markets. Last month I visited a 120-acre fruit and vegetable enterprise in Devon. Used for dairy or beef, it would employ around two

Tim Lang

The writer is professor of food policy at Thames Valley University.

Organic farming in Europe

	as a percentage of total agricultural area (1995)
Austria	1.3%
Belgium	0.3%
Denmark	1.3%
Finland	0.3%
Germany	1.8%
Iceland	0.7%
Ireland	0.7%
Malta	0.4%
Netherlands	0.6%
Spain	0.2%
Sweden	0.3%
United Kingdom	0.2%

A shake-up for a healthier industry

FARMING REFORM

We need a fresh start. Instead of the vast array of agricultural subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy, we need a single scheme of incentives encouraging ethical and organic farming.

Those farmers who wished to go it alone by foregoing state support and living from the market would be at liberty to do so - but within the limitations of more civilised environmental and health and safety standards (which would prohibit cannibalism in animals, for example).

A balance between livestock and arable production would be restored, giving a more varied landscape and rebuilding natural fertility with animal wastes. More diverse farming systems reduce the need for chemical use, as natural pest

sary to reorder the two functions that are so unsuccessfully combined within MAFF: defending the consumer, and promoting the farming industry.

MAFF should be renamed the Ministry of Food and Farming, reflecting the relative reordering of priorities. Consumer protection should then be floated off into its own independent division within the MFF. Such a Food Standards Agency should be analogous to other regulatory agencies established recently both here and overseas.

The National Rivers Authority could be a domestic model, with the food authorities in Australia, Norway and the US

providing overseas models. If given the necessary powers, a clear regulatory function and its own champion at Minister of State level, it could stand up to the producer-orientation in MAFF and restore public confidence in British food.

The challenge for the new Minister of Food and Farming would be open up to the mass of consumers the chance to buy at least some organic or specialist foods. If the policy framework is right, that's not such a tall order. But just now it looks well beyond the reach of the hapless Mr Hogg.

Hugh Raven

The writer is an independent food and farming policy specialist, and a council member of the Soil Association.

Shoppers say no to drugs in food

HEALTH BENEFITS

doorstep. Thousands more routinely head for the organic section of their local supermarket. Their motivation? To safeguard health from the potentially dangerous effects of agro-chemicals.

There is stronger evidence - although still circumstantial - against hormones or growth promoters which aim to increase weight and the proportion of lean muscle to fat in beef cattle. The alarm first sounded in 1980 when an Italian schoolboy allegedly began to grow breasts after eating veal containing traces of a synthetic hormone.

In 1989 the European Union banned the use of this and other hormones in meat production, and only last month tightened restrictions further on hormones.

treated beef, and widened its ban on other growth promoters, such as clenbuterol or "angel dust", linked with an outbreak of poisoning in Spain in 1990. The British government was a lone, opposing voice in this debate.

The declining sperm count of Western men has also aroused concern about modern farming. The suspicion is that responsibility lies with chemicals in pesticides, plastics, detergents and electronics that mimic the action of oestrogen, a female hormone. A Danish study in 1994 suggested that men eating organically-grown food have twice the sperm count of men who do not.

Organic farming would also

avoid the widespread use of antibiotics as preventive treatment in livestock who are not infected. There is concern that the liberal use of such drugs is the farmyard driving the development of microbes that are resistant to antibiotics.

It is hard to predict what would be the impact on health if Britain returned to a gentler mode of farming. Certainly those who are occupationally exposed to pesticides and other chemicals would benefit but the population could also gain. Most cancer specialists agree that eating more fruit and vegetables and less meat would reduce the number of cancers by at least a third. If those foodstuffs themselves were free of chemicals whose effect we don't really know, then how much greater would that figure be?

Liz Hunt

comment

Mad cow disease questions the basic principles of industrialised farming. As our agriculture stands condemned, five writers ask whether this is Britain's opportunity to lead the world and become the first major organic food producer

Can British farming go green?

Make British agriculture organic? The idea seems ludicrous. Imagine the grubby, worm-filled apples, the expensive meat, and the over-ripe tomatoes. Turning back the agricultural clock to set aside advances in fertility, pest control and intensive farming - it sounds like an economic disaster. Higher food prices, bankrupt farmers, rural job losses, an explosion in imports, and huge subsidies from the taxpayer: all appear inevitable.

That's the conventional wisdom. But hang on a minute. There is, in fact, a considerable economic case for the restructuring of British agriculture along organic lines, in other words free of pesticides, chemicals and hormones, and involving humane animal husbandry. The markets, particularly after BSE, are emerging. Existing organic farms show that production can be viable. Our rivals in Europe are already ahead of us in spotting the opportunities. An overhaul of the official subsidy system could transform the cost basis of production.

For a start, British shoppers clearly want a certain amount of organic produce on the supermarket shelves. The Soil Association regis-

ters most of Britain's organic farms. According to its director, Patrick Holden, consumer demand is still growing. The power of the consumer protest against the risks of BSE shows just how strong the desire for healthy and safe food has become.

Yet British farmers have not been responding to domestic demand. Even before the BSE scare, they failed to provide the organic produce that consumers wanted. Around 70 per cent of organic produce in this country is imported, including vegetables such as carrots that we could easily grow at home.

The result of this excess of demand over supply is that British organic food can often be sold at a premium, well above the cost of producing it.

Demand for organic food is even

higher elsewhere. At the moment only 0.3 per cent of British farmland is under organic cultivation. Packaging and distribution for a few scattered organic farms is still relatively expensive, because the costs of the organic labelling cannot be shared between many farms. Once the industry reached a critical mass, farmers and consumers could benefit from considerable savings, and the price of organic goods would fall.

Other countries are converting to a greener type of agriculture faster than Britain. Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy already have more of their farmland under organic production. In Austria, a remarkable 11.5 per cent of agricultural land is organically farmed. Land under organic production is doubling every year in Austria. In Germany it is rising by more than 50 per cent a year. In Italy 140 per cent a year. The rate in Britain is just 11 per cent.

A move towards more organic farming here would be economic, even under the current system of subsidies, according to Lawrence Woodward, the director of the Elm Farm Research Centre, which produces business plans for farmers

THE ECONOMICS



YVETTE COOPER

contemplating the organic conversion. Mixed farms which have both livestock and arable are, he says, best suited to organic production - particularly those which never entirely embraced the most intensive methods of modern industrial farming. Farmers are discouraged, however, by the novelty of organic farming and by uncertainty.

But the biggest obstacle to widespread organic farming in Britain is the structure of agricultural subsidies.

Farming organically means using no artificial fertilisers. As a result, land needs to be left fallow, or filled with clover to rebuild the fertility of the soil. At any one time, an organic farmer is likely to have

around half of his land lying fallow - missing out on direct subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy of £270 for every hectare under arable cultivation. The result is that the market is rigged against producing organic goods.

Other countries make an explicit attempt to compensate for the imbalance in CAP subsidies, drawing on the EU's Agriculture Environment budget to provide additional cash for organic farming. If the Government was serious about levelling the playing field, they could take a similar approach. A more radical strategy would be to renegotiate the CAP entirely and change the balance of subsidies across Europe.

It is easy enough to justify tipping the playing field in favour of organic production. Intensively produced food may be cheaper for the consumer in the shops, but there are costly side effects for society as a whole. Nitrates seeping in from fertilisers into the water supply need to be cleaned out by water companies and push up water bills. The health risk from modern farming methods, feeding patterns and chemical use may go far beyond mad cow disease. Heavy taxation of agri-

cultural chemicals would be one way to encourage farmers to use less. But before going overboard, it is worth recognising what can really be achieved, at least in the short run. No matter how great the health scares, British shoppers are not about to convert en masse to an entirely organic diet. And why should we? While most of us would rather the food on our plate was no longer coated with thick layers of chemicals, we are still happy to take advantage of prudent use of modern scientific methods.

Furthermore, organic vegetables are ugly. Smaller, grub-filled, irregular, these are not the beautiful round shiny red apples that shoppers are quick to pluck from the shelves. It will also be hard to wipe out the household budget would still be perfectly easy on organic British food - but it would require a serious change in our diets and cooking habits.

Trying to capture the healthy end of the European market has disadvantages too. Britain lacks a comparative advantage in organic produce. It is less costly for smaller mixed farms on the continent to adapt than the massive arable farms of East Anglia.

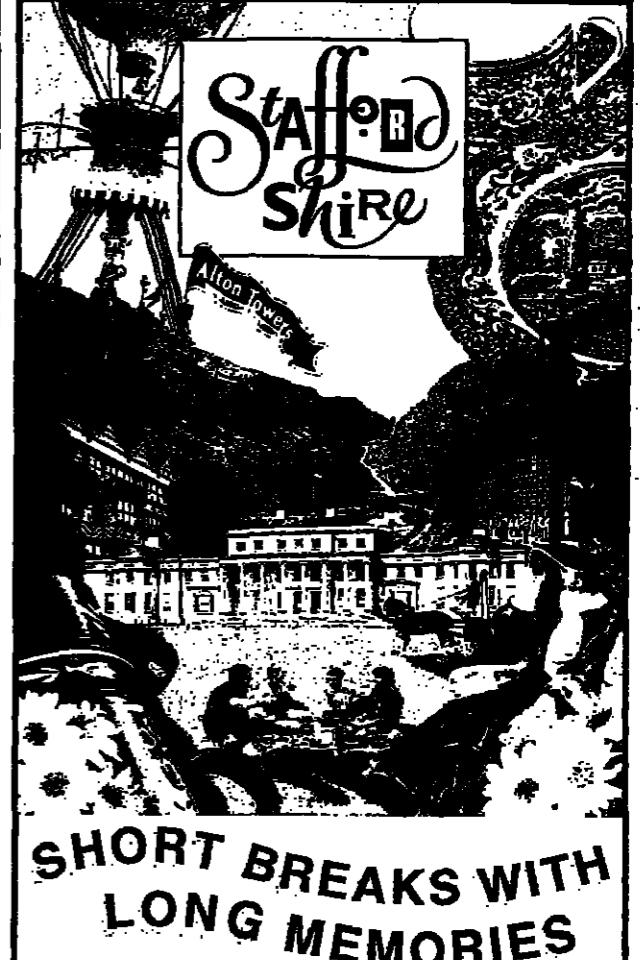
Nevertheless, the case for expanding organic production in Britain is overwhelming. Consumers already want it, and demand is rising both here and abroad. An entirely organic nation is not yet on the cards. That will need a more dramatic change in consumer tastes. But it is time for the Government to think as our competitors are, of creating a kinder fiscal regime for the organic farmer.



Pastures new: we need to dismantle the subsidies, get farmers producing for people again

Tony Buckingham

The writer is a farming journalist and scriptwriter for *The Archers*.



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BT and Oftel to lock horns over local calls

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

A new battle between BT and the telecoms regulator Oftel is about to break out over the expected growth in the market for local telephone calls. According to BT's own estimates growth in local calls will slow to 2 per cent a year in the five years from 1997 from a post-war average of 5 per cent.

The projection falls far short of that used by Oftel, the industry watchdog, in setting new price controls and will be used by BT in its increasingly bitter battle against the regulator.

BT says that assumptions over market growth are the "most marked" stumbling block in reaching agreement with Oftel. Unless the company accepts Oftel's decision on future price caps it will end up in the hands of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The company also launched a fresh attack on plans by Don Crickshank, director general of Oftel, to assume wider new powers against anti-competitive practices.

One source said: "You run the risk of the director general becoming the dictator general."

Oftel believes that local call volumes could grow by up to 7 per cent. However, BT argues that the main growth in the marketplace will come from special services such as 0800 numbers and call diversion which fall out-

side the scope of the price cap.

The company also said that with 92 per cent of the population linked to the network it would become increasingly difficult to match historic growth without a drastic change in the way people used the telephone.

The BT source said: "We are getting close to saturation point on the network and with increasing competition from mobile telephony and cable it will become an uphill struggle to grow the level of calls. We cannot find a good explanation as to Oftel's view on what the market can achieve."

Oftel said that the estimates would vary according to the type of analysis used, adding: "It could well be that BT is not comparing like with like."

The company is also gearing up for battle on Oftel's view of its potential efficiency gains.

BT, which has shed more than 100,000 jobs over the past four years, claims that the watchdog's target of 4.5 per cent improvement per year is "unrealistic and probably beyond our capabilities".

According to BT insiders: "We do not feel confident that there is a tremendous willingness on the part of Oftel to compromise. The ability to go to the MMC is the only real comfort we have that he might be represented in his decision."

Mr Crickshank is proposing to limit price changes to between five and nine percentage points less than inflation compared with "RPI minus 7.5" today.

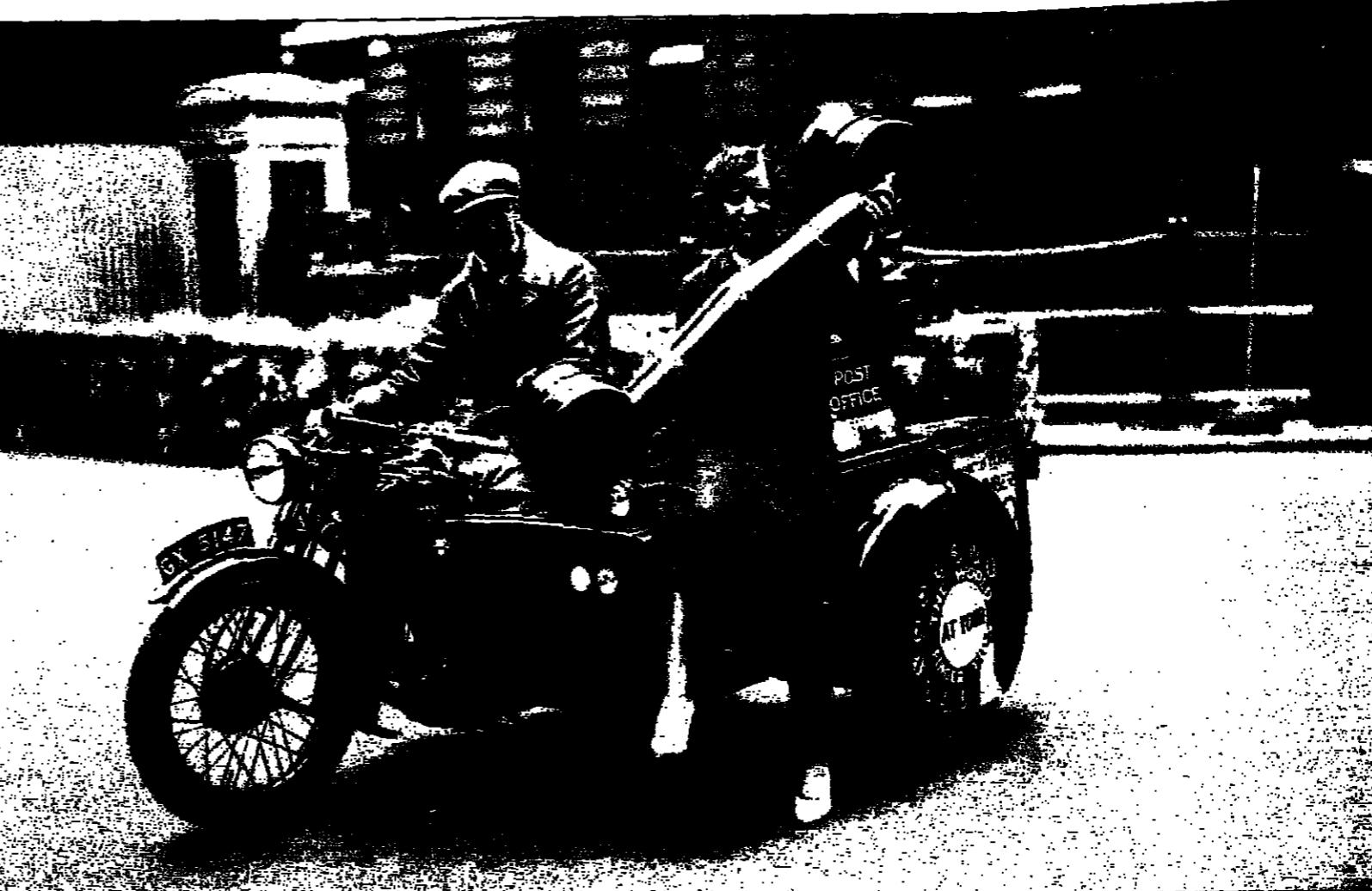
BT's view is that the regulator is being unacceptably tough and is not shared by some City analysts, who believe that Oftel has softened its approach over recent months. There is an assumption that the outcome will be "steady as you go", with Oftel plumping for the middle of its proposed range. According to most observers, BT could live fairly comfortably with the continuation of the current regime.

The pricing changes must be resolved around the middle of the year and go hand in hand with the plans for sweeping powers against market abuse to which BT vehemently objects.

The company's grumble is that there is an insufficient right of appeal in the Oftel proposal. It is also concerned that there are no binding guidelines setting out what will be anti-competitive and that it will therefore give Mr Crickshank and his successors a very wide discretionary power. The watchdog is likely to bend to some of these concerns by making the changes according to European competition law. But Mr Crickshank is so far unpersuaded that BT needs an independent appeals body. He has also made it clear that failure to agree on the competition issue would lead to an all-encompassing MMC reference.

Profile, page 17

Vodafone and Cellnet 'to retain lead'



Loud and clear: Orange and Mercury One-2-One need to move up a gear to keep up with their bigger rivals

Photograph: Hulton Getty

Vodafone and Cellnet will continue to dominate the UK mobile telephony market for many years to come in spite of the onslaught by fledgling rivals, Orange and Mercury One-2-One, according to a report by Société Générale Strauss-Turnbull, writes Mary Fagan.

SGST says the move towards new digital networks is slower than most people expected and that the opportunity for Orange

and One-2-One to lure people switching from analogue to digital has been overplayed.

Vodafone and Cellnet have older analogue networks and are gradually migrating customers across to their new digital systems.

One-2-One and Orange, which have always been digital, hope to grab those people while they are considering the move to the new technology.

The report concludes that Vodafone and Cellnet will continue to maintain a large share of the overall mobile market and will also have a larger share of the higher-spending business market. "For years to come they will retain the vast majority of non-cost conscious customers," it says.

The report also forecasts however, that the overall market will continue to boom with SGST says that the arrival of One-2-One and Orange, which

recently floated on the London Stock Exchange, has greatly expanded the overall market by targeting consumers with lower prices. It also points out that while Vodafone is still the biggest in terms of subscribers, it has found it more difficult to be the dominant force it was, not least because two of its three competitors appear to have more than a passing interest in profitability.

Bulgaria hits back at Rover

RUSSELL HOTTEN

The Bulgarian government yesterday hit back at Rover Group over closure of the country's sole car maker after the embarrassing failure of a joint venture with the UK company.

Roumen Gechev, deputy prime minister, said the project's demise was because the Rover Maestro cars being produced were uncompetitive and there was no marketing strategy.

He said allegations made last week that bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of government support were behind the collapse of the Rodacar joint venture were untrue.

"Claims that the government contributed to Rodacar's failure are absolutely groundless," Mr Gechev said, adding that the government had no contractual commitment to buy the Maestros.

Vincent Hammersley, a Rover official, had said that the government's failure to order Maestros for its own fleet, despite assurances that it would do so, had hit the company.

He said last week that the Bulgaria plant would close at the end of May after selling only about 200 of more than 2,000 Maestros that had been imported for assembly in the country.

Rodacar was launched a year ago when Rover, a division of Germany's BMW, invested \$20m (£13.5m) for a 51 per cent stake. A private Bulgarian consortium, Daru Group, owned the remaining 49 per cent of the venture, which was to be a launch pad into other east European countries. Last month Daru hit financial difficulties, and its banking operation was rescued by the state bank.

Employment figures put the skids under Wall St

DANIELLE ROBINSON
New York
and RUSSELL HOTTEN

rate easing and raised fears that the Fed's next move will be to tighten.

By 1pm the Dow was down 134.40 points to trade at 5,545.48 and the 30-year bond yield had pierced key support levels to 6.93 per cent.

"It's a bloodbath, but one that was very much expected after the employment data and the subsequent reaction in the bond market," Phil Orlando, chief investment officer at Value Line's asset management division, said.

The sell-off was across the board, with declining issues swamping advancing stocks by an almost 20 to 1 margin on the New York Stock Exchange.

Broad market indexes were also sharply lower.

Analysts are predicting 7.25 per cent on the 30-year bond - a crucial level at which many investors are expected to reduce their portfolio weighting in shares and put cash into money-market instruments. Never-

theless, many leading market commentators were still reluctant to call yesterday's sell-off the beginning of a bear market.

"I would not jump to that conclusion based on one day's trading," Dick McCabe, chief market analyst at Merrill Lynch in New York, said.

London was expected to feel some knock-on effect today. Stephen King, international economist at James Capel, pointed to February's US non-farm payrolls which had only a small impact in London.

"What may be happening to the US economy does not necessarily apply to Europe," he said. "This looks like a specific US problem, whereas most European economies are slowing down with further rate cuts to come."

He told Reuters news agency: "You will probably see the US bond market weakness coming through to Europe but I would very much doubt if we see any sort of permanent correction."

Shocks in store for electricals

NIC CICUTT

The electrical retailing industry is set to face a further round of restructuring as already-squeezed margins come under further pressure, according to Verdict, the retail consultants.

Profit margins on warranties, the guarantees sold on electrical goods, are also likely to fall as greater competition is forced on retailers by the Office of Fair Trading.

A number of banks appear increasingly attracted by the warranties market: "The net result will be increased competition and lower prices," the Verdict report predicted yesterday.

"[We] calculate that warranties can contribute up to 4 per cent of gross profit margin. Any reduction in this figure will have a significant impact in a market where retailers' profits are already wafer-thin."

Verdict's findings come as Dixons, the leading electrical store group that owns Currys and PC World, extended its lead in the sector to 16.7 of market share in 1995.

Comet, the second-placed retailer owned by the Kingfisher group, succeeded in arresting the decline it faced in 1994, raising its share of the market to about 5.4 per cent, followed by Norweb at 2.5 per cent.

Not all the problems are caused by retailers: "The supply side of the business is characterised by a large global number of manufacturers with well-developed brands in which they have invested heavily," the report added.

"If Comet was to acquire Norweb, its number two position in the market would be consolidated. If Scottish Power won the battle, it would become number two and put a serious dent in Kingfisher's ambitions in the electricals market," the report argued.

Aside from the OFT report into warranty sales, retailers face continuing investigations by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into their relationship with suppliers.

Despite significant gaps in market share between top players in the market, most directly comparable products are sold at the same price by all leading retailers.

Verdict claims that the wide variations in market share

should produce massive scale advantages, with superior buying terms for market leaders.

Not all the problems are caused by retailers: "The supply side of the business is characterised by a large global number of manufacturers with well-developed brands in which they have invested heavily," the report added.

"If Comet was to acquire Norweb, its number two position in the market would be consolidated. If Scottish Power won the battle, it would become number two and put a serious dent in Kingfisher's ambitions in the electricals market," the report argued.

While Dixons in particular has benefited from relatively inelastic price competition, should it choose to mount a price war it could do so, forcing some of the less competitive retailers out of business.

Hidden subsidies by regional electricity companies of their own stores are also expected to decline following the deregulation of the electricity market in 1998.

Despite current expansion

by several key players, further rationalisation is expected as more high street outlets close in favour of larger out-of-town retail outlets.

The entry of Escom, the German computer firm, into the high street with its takeover of many Rumbelows sites, is not expected to reverse this process. The company competes on the low cost of its computers, but many potential buyers may be as attracted by its rivals' brand names.

Decision time arrives for N&P members

NIC CICUTT

Hundreds of members of National & Provincial, the seventh-largest building society in the UK, are expected to attend a special general meeting this week to decide whether to accept a £1.35bn takeover bid by Abbey National.

The meeting, in Manchester on Thursday, marks the climax to Abbey National's year-long campaign to convince N&P's 5.1 million members of the benefits of abandoning mutual status. Although those attending the takeover, Abbey National is offering £500-worth of its shares to all borrowers.

Savers who have been with the society for more than two years are being offered £750 in cash or shares, plus 7 per cent of all eligible balances up to £50,000. A joint saver and borrower could gain up to £4,750 from the takeover.

N&P executives believe that they have won the argument, among those voting, in favour of the bid. But the society yesterday refused to say how many of its members cast postal votes by the deadline at midnight on Saturday, raising fears that a high number of abstentions may scupper the deal. However, an N&P spokesman said that

since the takeover terms were published in July last year, the society had dealt with more than 100,000 letters from members with specific queries on the deal. At least 140,000 phone calls have been received on a special helpline set up by N&P.

"Since July last year we have sent out at least four mailings to our members and in the past few weeks we have carried out an extensive television campaign to encourage them to vote," he said.

The estimated cost of the campaign has been £3m. The spokesman added that the main purpose of the mailings and the

Rentokil to sound out improved offer

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Rentokil, the business services group, is planning to meet key institutional shareholders this week to discuss how high it must raise its offer for rival BET.

Clive Thompson, Rentokil's chief executive, is believed to feel that another 10p a share might secure victory, though some investors are preparing to tell him that BET is worth an extra 15p.

The meetings come as BET was planning more complaints to the Panel today over claims that the Rentokil camp was behind market rumours that big institutions are pressuring for an agreed deal.

BET, which complained to the Panel last week about the rumours, said it would make further representations because they were continuing to be spread.

BET has already complained to the Panel about a stockholders' note from NatWest Securities, which did not say the firm was a joint underwriter to the Rentokil offer.

Legal & General and M&G, both large shareholders in BET, have denied suggestions they were pressuring the company to accept a recommended takeover. BET has twice rejected Rentokil's offer of 10p.

Rentokil has until Friday to decide whether to raise its current £1.05p offer, though the company is said to now accept it.

its first offer is not sufficient. "Soundings will be taken to see how much higher we have to go," a Rentokil source said.

The current offer is nine new Rentokil shares and \$800 cash for every 20 BET shares. At last week's closing share prices, the offer values BET at 204.25p a share. This is a cash alternative of 197.5p.

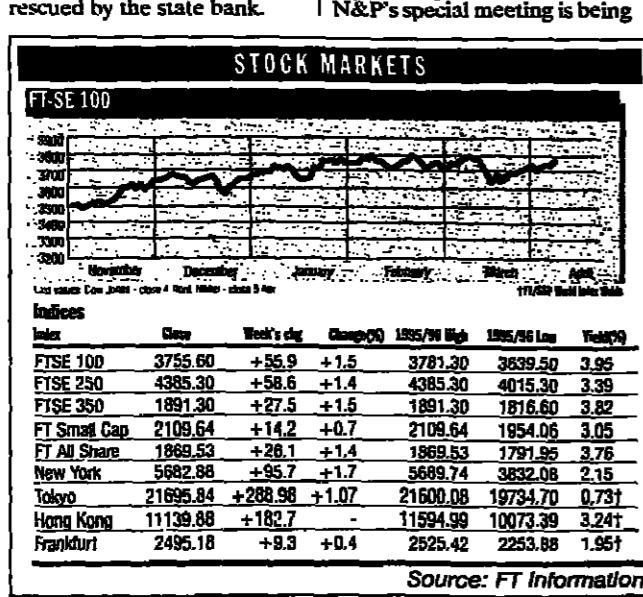
Two large institutional shareholders told the *Independent* that BET was worth a minimum of 10p more. One said: "BET has been better at getting its message across. An offer worth 220p a share could probably be called a knock-out blow."

BET, too, is planning to lobby large shareholders and hopes to get to see about 30 institutions this week, after seeing about 10 last week.

Meanwhile, Rentokil's annual report, published this weekend, showed that Mr Thompson's salary rose £115,000, from £742,000, to £857,000. The remuneration included a £320,000 performance-related bonus.

Any attempt by BET to make capital over the pay rise were expected to be met with reminders from Rentokil that BET's chief executive, John Clark, stands to make up to £5m from turning BET round.

The annual report also included promises by Rentokil to appoint two non-executive directors if it gained control of BET.



JPI in 1996

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JOHN PHILPOTT

If we are to have a grown-up debate on solutions to mass unemployment, politicians of all parties should openly admit that there may be a price to pay and address how best to share the pain'

Honesty is the best policy when it comes to jobs

Just in case you missed it, something remarkable happened at last week's rather low-key G7 jobs summit in Lille. A politician – a British one at that – came clean about the cost of tackling joblessness. Okay. So Education and Employment Secretary Gillian Shephard gave her overseas counterparts a somewhat rose-tinted account of Britain's recent record of job creation. But in stating that the pain of any kind of change and restructuring would have to be faced up to, Mrs Shephard displayed a degree of candour not shown since former Chancellor Norman Lamont let slip that he considered rising unemployment a "price well worth paying" in the battle against inflation.

What Mrs Shephard failed to mention, of course, was that the Government's policy of deregulated flexibility means that the pain she talks about has been very unevenly distributed, has increased working poverty and threatened social cohesion.

Those tempted simply to berate Mrs Shephard, however, ought to think again. If we are to have a grown-up debate on solutions to mass unemployment politicians of all parties should, instead, openly admit that there may be a price to pay and address how best to share the pain.

Ironically, the political task in this respect would be eased somewhat if the current consensus on macro-economic policy could be challenged. Part of Britain's jobless problem is due to the masochistic macro-economic policy being inflicted in the quest for so-called "stability". But though the aim is laudable, the chosen means has severe shortcomings. As the late Nobel Laureate, Professor James Meade, continually argued, it makes best sense to base financial policy on a target for money GDP. Such an approach has the merit of attempting to maintain greater stability in output and employment rather than simply to preserve price stability in line with an essentially arbitrary target rate of inflation. Yet even with inflationary pressures subdued, mainstream politicians in the Government and opposition parties appear reluctant to accept this, seeming to prefer "hair-shirt economics" despite the evident harm being done to the real economy.

One of the consequences of the current

vacuum in macro-economic thinking is that policy debates focus almost exclusively on supply-side solutions, such as better skills provision. This causes problems since supply-side measures cannot hope to prove fully effective if demand is constrained – which helps explain why unemployed people themselves are often amongst those most sceptical about the value of more training. None the less, the supply side clearly does matter since even a controlled demand expansion would at best hit inflationary pressures at around 1.75 million unemployed (6 per cent of the workforce). So what are the supply side options for tackling core joblessness?

The option favoured by the Tory right is to deregulate the labour market still further and cut welfare to the bone. However, the social problems associated with a flexible labour market are already apparent and a "more of the same" approach could impose intolerable social costs.

Those on the left nostalgic for the pre-Thatcher era might prefer instead to push demand to a level consistent with very low unemployment and implement some form of "pay policy" to reduce the wage pressure that will inevitably arise. Unfortunately, this option – while merititing renewed consideration – is totally out of fashion. A more radical option still would be to encourage "work-sharing" – but in the absence of income-sharing, which may be difficult to achieve, this could raise hourly labour costs and serve to increase rather than lower core unemployment. This leaves one with perhaps the best option – ie employment programmes targeted at the long-term (one year plus) unemployed.

As the chart shows, long-term unemployment has fallen during the recovery. But the experience of the Lawson boom in the late 1980s suggests a core of at least 500,000 long-term jobless. Few would disagree that helping these people into jobs is justified on grounds of fairness. And, as Professor Richard Layard and his colleagues at the LSE have demonstrated in countless studies, providing jobs for the long-term unemployed would not stoke inflation. If left unaided, the chronic jobless remain outside the active



labour market. Unlike their short-term unemployed counterparts in the dole queue, they exert no disciplining influence on wage bargainers. So reactivating the long-term unemployed is efficient as well as fair.

For this group – many, though not all, of whom lack skills – the essential policy choice lies between making them more employable, thus pricing them into better paid jobs, or pricing them into the types of jobs they can perform without new skills by means of subsidies or adjustments to taxes and benefits. An obvious problem with radical tax/benefit reform – such as the introduction of Citizens' Income – is that while this may improve incentives for the lower-paid it will have implications for tax rates and work incentives further up the earnings scale. Training meanwhile is expensive and the track record of government training schemes both in Britain and abroad is poor.

On the face of things, therefore, job subsidies paid to employers, or the provision of temporary jobs in the public or voluntary sectors, look a better bet. Indeed, so long as the gross cost of jobs programmes does not exceed the cost of unemployment to the Exchequer, they should be self-financing, at least in the medium term.

The self-financing argument for a wholesale onslaught on long-term unemployment in this way rests on the assumption that each subsidised job shortens the dole queue. But

it can be argued that some of the subsidised jobs would have been created anyway, while others will displace existing jobs. If this occurs the net impact of measures to help the long-term jobless will be reduced and the net cost raised. The counter-argument of advocates of job subsidies is that even if some job displacement occurs, those displaced will be more employable and better able to fill job vacancies than the long-term unemployed. This, it is said, will reduce wage pressure in the labour market, thus providing a spur to further job creation.

This latter argument has considerable intellectual merit but has yet to be put seriously to the test. The Labour Party, attracted by the possibility of a "free lunch", has deployed the argument in announcing plans for a new deal to effect abolish long-term unemployment amongst 18-25-year-olds. However, more conventional analysis indicates that jobs programmes could entail on-going net expenditure. A sensible position is to remain agnostic on this issue and policy makers should thus err on the side of caution when assessing the likely cost of jobs programmes.

A crude calculation suggests that serious measures to help 500,000 long-term unemployed back to work might require net public spending of up to £2bn per annum – still a very cheap lunch but not a totally free one.

Assuming that a future Labour government would not be prepared to fund this spending by higher borrowing, cutting other public programmes, or raising business taxes the burden would have to fall on personal taxation (£2bn is equivalent to a penny on the standard rate of income tax).

Ultimately, therefore, an effective package of measures designed to cut long-term unemployment that incurred a net cost would entail a redistribution of income from employed "insiders" to formerly unemployed "outsiders".

It may be comforting to think that all that is needed is to "tax the rich", close tax loopholes, or raise capital gains or inheritance taxes. The reality is that a large part of the burden of extra taxation would have to fall upon people on around average incomes and above, many of whom, although "comfortable", do not think of themselves as affluent (and are increasingly concerned about their own job and income security).

One sales pitch for policy makers would be to emphasise the advantage of lower unemployment – for example, higher output of private or public services and reduced social problems such as crime.

But if insiders do not consider the price of low unemployment worth paying, or are unwilling to pay it, they will either resist tax increases through the ballot box or press for compensatory wage rises which could sabotage the entire job-creation exercise. No wonder politicians prefer to talk about free lunches.

The political constraints on measures that would make a serious impact on unemployment without further eroding the social fabric of Britain are considerable. Politicians and commentators who dislike the unequal pain imposed by deregulated flexibility ought to spell out which members of society will have to pay the price of a more constructive programme of national renewal and full employment and set out the hard choices. Those not prepared to be honest about the necessary means should at least be honest enough to abandon the goal.

The author is director of the Employment Policy Institute. He writes in a personal capacity.

Cracking the code for the mother of all mergers

Sir Peter Bonfield, the chief executive of BT, knows a thing or two about secret codes.

His father was part of the small team of engineers that cracked the German Enigma code in the last war, a breakthrough that helped considerably towards the Allied victory.

This time he is on the receiving end. Despite all BT's efforts to keep its talks with Cable & Wireless confidential, the secret has been well and truly blown open and the two companies find themselves negotiating their £3bn merger in the glare of intense public scrutiny.

If Sir Peter was looking for a challenge when he decided to quit after 10 years at the helm of computer firm ICL and join BT at the start of this year he could scarcely have picked

The chief executive of BT must pick a careful path in an industry that is converging at frightening speed

try that is converging at a frightening pace and throwing up ever more powerful competitors as the lines blur between telephony, computing and entertainment.

Those who know him believe he is equal to the challenge. During his time at ICL he gained a reputation as a determined and reliable negotiator.

THE TUESDAY INTERVIEW

PETER BONFIELD

mined and sometimes ruthless manager with a taste for discipline that he himself suggests resulted from his early education at a convent school.

"His easy-going and bantering manner hides an iron will when it comes to business matters," says one former colleague. "But he is scrupulously fair and very straight and open. He also has a dead-pan sense of humour. He is very charming in a curious sort of way."

Talking about Bonfield the man does not come easily to Sir Peter who much prefers to concentrate on BT the company.

He will not talk about Cable & Wireless but there is no disguising how strategically important its 57 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom would be to BT's global ambitions.

"We would like to reach agreement with the regulator under the current consultation," Sir Peter says.

However, BT will not settle at any price simply to avoid a long MMC inquiry that will be drawn on management time.

Sir Peter's argument is that the new price cap is set too tightly it will prevent competitors entering the telecoms market and thereby defeat the regulator's objective. "If you force very low

returns on capital employed, a lot of people would worry about investing in such an industry.

"Competition is good for the industry but it must be sustainable. If the risks are high and the return is low that is bad for the overall industry."

Coming in from outside BT as Sir Peter does, he senses that much has changed since privatisation. "BT is at a very interesting stage now it is being market-driven whereas 10 years ago it was mostly technology-driven and a single product."

"It still needs to be more responsive. It can be. In the next few years it will be. The artificial distinction between fixed

If you force very low returns on capital many would worry about investing'

and cellular will disappear over the next 5-10 years; it would be useful to have as a way forward, as part of our strategy, to integrate these together. It is an important issue for us."

The new BT boss is an engineer, joining Texas Instruments after graduating from Loughborough University. With TI in Texas, he met his wife, Josephine, and developed his

love of American life to which he is determined to return.

"My long-term personal goal has not changed. I enjoy the States and have strong links there. If you ask me whether I imagine retiring under a palm

tree the answer is yes. In the meantime I have to earn a living."

Sir Peter is a fitness fanatic who found to his disgust when he arrived at BT that the gym did not open until 7am. Instead

he decided to squat during the

time the RAC club where the gym opens at six.

Since then, his time has been taken up by a rather larger test of strength and one that the telecoms industry and the fi-

ancial markets are eagerly

waiting to see him and the BT chairman, Sir Iain Vallance, pull off – the largest merger in British corporate history.

Michael Harrison

'In 20 to 30 years we want to be among the most successful global telecoms groups'

a bigger one. The immediate task is to construct a merger with C&W that satisfies politicians, regulators and shareholders alike. That is daunting enough. Beyond that lies the distinct possibility of a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission by the telecoms regulator, Don Cruickshank. And beyond that lies the challenge of adapting to an indus-

Jardines perfects knack of looking a greenhorn

What is it about the mighty house of Jardines that makes more or less everything it touches over turn to dust, or, to be even more cruel, makes the dust turn to dirt in its Hong Kong home base?

It is far too soon to start writing Jardines' obituaries. The conglomerate, whose name is synonymous with the creation of Hong Kong as a thriving commercial centre, retains many well-performing businesses; but every time it enters new markets it ends up looking like a greenhorn groping its way around foreign lands.

Worse still, it has thoroughly alienated the new masters from Peking who will be taking Hong Kong back under their wing next year. Local companies have become wary of any association with Jardines and this has limited its ability to make further progress in Hong Kong where its fortunes were built.

In Britain, Jardines was reluctantly pushed to centre stage as a result of the Trafalgar saga that ended last month when the Scandinavian ship builder Kvaerner terminated the group's unhappy stewardship by buying Trafalgar. In Britain, Jardines had

company and was able to walk away litigation-free but poorer. Had Jardine Strategic stuck with its original 1987 deal it would, by now, be putting money in the bank.

Jardines was committed to moving a greater percentage of its assets out of Hong Kong before the 1997 Chinese takeover. It simply could not afford to cease the quest for overseas acquisitions.

By April of the following year Jardines had control of the ailing company, spending over £300m to obtain it. After last month's sale it will be able to write back less than half this amount in the current year's Hong Kong Land accounts. Omens of the Trafalgar debacle were easy enough to find. For example, just before the 1987 stock market crash the Keswick family, which controls Jardines, entered into an agreement with the New York-based finance house Bear Stearns to acquire a 20 per cent stake for £391m. The crash came, the Keswick panicked and reneged on the deal. Almost four years later, following a flurry of litigation, Jardines handed over some \$60m to the American

record for 1995 because of a string of overseas acquisitions that were badly timed and strategically mistaken as they focused on the lower and most competitive end of the market.

Big losses were chalked up in Australia where it controls the cheap and cheerful Franklins supermarket chain. In Britain a controlling interest in Kwik Save, acquired in 1987, and subsequent

control of Victor Value in 1989, has brought nothing but the pain of vicious competition. In Spain red ink continues to be liberally spilled over the books of the equally cheap and cheerful Simago chain.

The only good Dairy Farm news came from Hong Kong and neighbouring countries, but here's the rub. Jardines trading activities tend to flourish in Asia – its finance house, Jardine Fleming, is a prime example – but there is no getting away from the political problems it faces at the core of its profits centre.

Dairy Farm has just reported a truly dreadful profits

of Hong Kong by moving its domicile to Bermuda back in 1984, as soon as the agreement was finalised for the transfer of sovereignty. Jardines' example has been followed by the majority of listed companies, but, as ever, the one who leads gets to the blame. In 1997 the Chinese government signalled that relations had deteriorated further (after the company was blamed for supporting Governor Chris Patten's democratic reform plans), a statement by the official Chinese news agency condemned Jardines as the black sheep of the business community.

It craved for nothing but chaos," the agency said.

Last year Jardines tried to restore relations with what amounted to a public apology to China by Jardine Matheson's managing director, Alasdair Morrison. China responded with a less than warm statement that Jardines would have to demonstrate its sincerity. The depth of Chinese feeling is reflected by the fact Beijing has vetoed further development of Hong Kong's new container terminal by refusing to accept a concession given to a Jardines-led consortium.

Little wonder therefore that local companies are shunning Jardines like a bad smell, fearful of any association that will undermine their business interests. Yet Jardines remains one of the colony's biggest companies, even though its main stake is in property and it has demonstrated an uncanny ability to sell off bits of its property portfolio just before the market scales new heights.

Nor has it done itself any favours by so thoroughly falling out with the local stock market regulators as to ensure its delisting from the local bourse. The Jardines companies have their principal listing in London and were hoping to regain local business by obtaining a listing in Singapore but the volume of share turnover has slumped badly since last year's move.

Last week Jardine announced it was taking a 20 per cent stake in a subsidiary of the Tata Group, one of India's biggest companies. Perhaps the older parts of the former empire are beginning to look more attractive than the last remnants of the colonial system.

Stephen Vines



Taking on the regulator: Sir Peter Bonfield says BT cannot settle regardless of cost

Photograph: John Voss

IN BRIEF

- Viacom and KirchGroup, the German media group, are to form a five-year alliance, which includes broadening Viacom's presence in the European television market and expanding KirchGroup's programming line-up as it prepares to launch a digital pay TV service in Europe. As part of the agreements, the KirchGroup has acquired from Viacom's Paramount Pictures all free and pay television rights in German-speaking territories to the US company's television shows and films produced during the term of the agreements. Viacom also obtained an option to acquire a 12 per cent stake from KirchGroup in Gestevision Telecinco, owner of Spain's Estudios TeleCinco.
- McDonnell Douglas Corporation, the US aircraft manufacturer, yesterday named Michael Sears as president of Douglas Aircraft Co, its commercial aircraft unit in Long Beach, California. Sears had been vice-president-general manager of McDonnell Douglas' largest tactical aircraft programme, the F/A-18 Hornet strike fighter. He succeeds Robert Hood Jr, 63, who will serve as president emeritus of Douglas and retire later this year.
- General Motors topped the Fortune 500 list of the US's largest corporations in 1995, with General Electric in second place, both in the same spot as the year before. According to the magazine's annual listing released yesterday, GM weighed in with US \$168.8bn (£100bn) in sales in 1995, up 9 per cent, and \$6.9bn in profits (£1.1bn). The car maker's profits rose 40.4 per cent. GE's sales of \$137.1bn were up 6.8 per cent compared with 1994. Its profits of \$4.14bn were down 22 per cent.
- EgyptAir is to buy four Airbus Industrie A-321s. The first of the airliners is to be delivered in July 1997. Financial details were not disclosed. EgyptAir, which has a fleet of 42 aircraft, also plans to buy three Boeing 777s next year to replace its 767s, a company source said. The Airbus deal with EgyptAir comes amid reports that China is also to place an order for around 25 150-seat aircraft. The order

Sunday's race was less complicated than the other two victories. On the other hand it was perhaps a more typical grand prix

Before the start of the Argentinian Grand Prix, I really felt that the odds were against me winning my third race in succession this season. The competition was closer than ever before. Under normal circumstances, I could cope with that, but a severe stomach upset meant I was not exactly full of energy – or anything else, come to that – and ready for a 72-lap race.

I had not managed to get any nutrition into me during the previous two days. Throughout Saturday night, I was visiting the loo every couple of hours, so I didn't have much sleep. I felt sure I was going to be pretty uncomfortable at some stage on Sunday afternoon, but, fortunately, everything seemed to abate just in time. Not only did I reach the finish without any major problems, the Rothmans-Williams-Renault team enjoyed another one-two as Jacques Villeneuve followed me home.

The necessary concentration had

taken my mind off any personal discomfort thanks to having plenty to think about, more or less from start to finish. With Michael Schumacher sharing the front row of the grid, my first job would be to judge just how fast the Ferrari could go. Michael was able to put pressure on me during the early stages of the race, so I had to pace myself quite carefully and yet push as hard as I could. At first, I was looking in my mirror to see what Schumacher was doing, but then I decided to concentrate solely on pulling out a lead. By 20 laps I had built up an advantage of several seconds and it seemed I had the measure of the Ferrari.

The gap reduced to four seconds after my first refuelling stop, so we lost a little bit of time in the pits. I was starting to push again when the safety car suddenly appeared and we had to form up behind it. You can imagine my thoughts because all the

hard work had been more or less in vain. Michael would be right on my tail.

There was good reason for the appearance of the safety car. Badger's Forti had overturned and, not long after, a Ligier caught fire in a big way. Both drivers were OK but, in the meantime, I was trying to work out how best to deal with the restart now that the field was stacked up behind me.

Once the safety car pulled into the pit lane, the timing would be critical since you are not allowed to overtake until reaching the start and finish line which, in this case, was some distance from the pit entrance. I have to say that the safety car was being driven very slowly, which did nothing for tyre temperatures and pressures, both of which are vital when it comes to the performance of the car. This safety car was making such a bad job of it that I had to put my foot on the clutch

most of the time, or put the car in neutral and coast along behind him. To complicate matters even further, I no longer had any radio communication. I couldn't hear the pits but they could hear me. In fact, they could hear me fuming, with a few choice words. Everyone was having a go at getting through and, at one point an engineer was spending a lot of time trying to communicate. I was wishing he would stop talking because I couldn't work out what was

being said and I couldn't say anything while he was talking. In fact, in an effort to get him to shut up, I even tried to signal with my hands in case there were pictures coming from the on-board camera. And, of course, the all the time I was trying to prepare myself for the rolling restart.

I got the jump on Schumacher and began to ease out a lead once more. The next problem was obviously going to be receiving the call for my second pit stop, but, by relying on the pit board, I came in at the right moment and that time I got away quickly.

When Schumacher dropped out, the pit signals said that Jean Alesi was in second place. And he was flying. The Benetton-Renault started to close the gap and I had to pull out all the stops. That was about the only time when I had to really drive close to the limit. I was anxious to stay clear of Alesi because I knew he

would go hell for leather at the slightest sniff of victory. Fortunately, he made a very slow pit stop a few laps later.

When his team-mate, Gerhard Berger, retired I had a sufficient cushion over Jacques Villeneuve to maintain my lead until the finish.

That made it four straight victories – if you include the last round of the 1995 championship. It is the longest winning streak I've ever had; it's a brilliant way to start the season.

The three wins I've had in 1996 could not have been more different. Last Sunday's race was less complicated than the other two. On the other hand, it was perhaps a more typical grand prix, all about pressure, close competition and less variables – apart from the safety car.

The one constant, however, has been the advantage of winning pole position, something I didn't do in Melbourne but which I have made sure of ever since. In Argentina, that

was quite a pressure moment; I was only fourth fastest, there were just three minutes to go and about 17 cars on the track. On such a tight circuit as Buenos Aires, I simply had to get pole position, otherwise winning the race would have been almost out of the question.

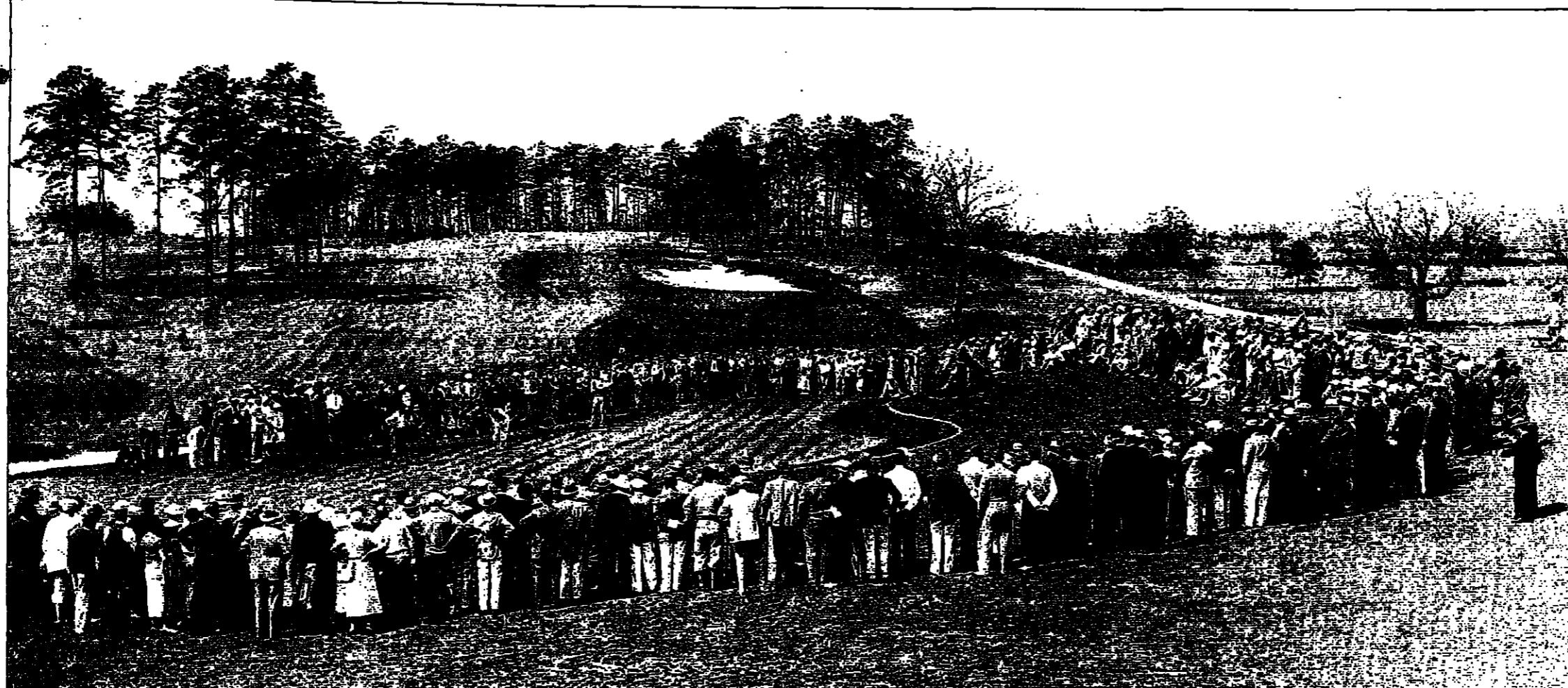
Everything may have gone according to plan last weekend but everyone is only too aware that just a few hiccups can see your advantage vaporise into nothing. On the other hand, while I'm on the winning streak, I really want to pull off another win in Germany in three weeks' time.

After the race had finished I had time to think about going home again after the South American trip; time to realise that, thanks to my fitness, I had made the rostrum and received the trophy from President Carlos Menem. I can honestly say that I'd never felt better.

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DAMON HILL



Spot the difference: Augusta likes to maintain that nothing changes, but the scenes on the 18th on Sunday will barely resemble those on the same hole in 1934

Photographs: Corbis-Bettmann/UPI

Novice winners blur the form line

Followers of form for the Masters will be baffled by the season on the United States tour recently – the virtually unknown Paul Stankowski became the fourth first-time winner in the past five weeks when he beat Brandel Chamblee in a play-off to take the BellSouth Classic in Marietta, Georgia, and with it the last place in the field at Augusta on Thursday.

Stankowski and Chamblee finished on eight-under-par at 280, two in front of Nick Price and the overnight leader David Duval – and eight ahead of both Colin Montgomerie and Ian Woosnam, who closed with disappointing rounds of 73.

Stankowski, a 26-year-old Californian who won on the junior tour the previous week, was originally the sixth reserve for the tournament, but picked up the £156,000 first prize after Chamblee dumped his second shot to the par-five 18th – the opening sudden-death hole – into the lake.

Woosnam and Montgomerie, first and second respectively on the European Order of Merit, could not repeat their third-round 68s and fell back into the pack. Two shots further back was Sam Torrance following a closing 70.

The other first-time winners since the start of March have been Tim Herron, Paul Goydos and Scott McCarron. They have all won places in the starting line-up at Augusta. The sole exception was Fred Couples' triumph over Montgomerie in the Tournament Players' Championship at Sawgrass last week.

Stankowski's victory means that this year's field will now be 94 strong, eight more than in the tournament won by Ben Crenshaw last April. The field includes 12 Europeans.

And, of course, Jack Nicklaus, who warmed up for the season's first major by winning the 100th professional victory of his career at Scottsdale, Arizona, on Sunday when he retained the Tradition title on the lucrative Seniors' tour.

He sealed his fourth win in the tournament with a second straight round of 65, seven under par, which gave him a 16-under aggregate of 272 – three better than the former US Open champion Hale Irwin.

■ Kelly Robbins beat Val Skinner with an 18-foot birdie putt on the fifth play-off hole to win the LPGA tournament at the new Twelve Bridges club in Lincoln, California. Emilee Klein, Meg Mallon and Barb Mucha tied for third at 277, while Laura Davies' final round 70 gave her a 282 total and a share of 16th place.

Scores, Sporting Digest, page 23

Strange trio who created the Masters

They like things to be neat and tidy at Augusta. Clifford Roberts, co-founder of the host club of the Masters, and perhaps the man most responsible for its image, could not face untidiness and loss of independence when cancer eventually ruined his health just as he passed 80. He blew his brains out with a Smith & Wesson .38 revolver one morning in 1977, but not before he had gone to the clubhouse barber for a haircut.

In 1921 then a young partner in the Wall Street brokers Reynolds & Co, Roberts made his first fortune buying and selling leases of Texas oil. Eventually becoming one of the largest stockbrokers in New York running profitable accounts like General Motors, he had made enough cash and had enough time to focus on golf. By 1931 Roberts had serious financial friends like the bosses of Coca-Cola and the Singer Sewing Machine company. But crucially, Roberts was the most important FOB, the "Friends of Bob".

When Bobby Jones – the young legend fresh from winning everything – hinted at his desire to build a great golf course Roberts found the money, found the backers and found the Georgia Nursery property belonging to a Belgian aristocrat, Baron Berckman. When the television cameras this week pan round the Masters course and commentators show off their horticultural expertise by praising the beauty of the azaleas and the double magnolias, it is the Baron and his "Fruitlands Nursery" who should be remembered.

The rest on view is down to Jones, Roberts, and a Scottish physician turned military camouflage expert

turned golf-course designer, the remarkable Dr Alister MacKenzie.

In new research into MacKenzie's life by Professor James Scott, a retired obstetrician from Leeds, there are the first hints into why this triumvirate of the good doctor, Jones and Roberts were able to create the one thing Americans covet over all else – tradition.

MacKenzie's life as unearthed by Scott reads like a Hollywood drama. He was born in Normington, near Leeds, but the family came from Lochinver in Sutherland, northern Scotland. Lochinver is crucial to MacKenzie and therefore to Augusta too. Here the young MacKenzie was introduced to the skills of natural camouflage when he was out stalking red deer with his father.

Although he qualified as a doctor MacKenzie was never a committed man of medicine. He served in both the Boer and Great War but in 1916 he resigned from the Medical Corps, giving up the rank of major to become a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers to do camouflage work. He would later simplify the task of the course designer by stating: "The practitioner of camouflage tries to set up insoluble confusions with the enemy."

Scott believes MacKenzie was a jovial, roguish, outgoing and confident personality. "These features are best encompassed by the Scot's word *gallus*," he says. But one trait

The traditions that define Augusta were developed by a reactionary Scottish camouflage expert. James Cusick reports

explains why MacKenzie may have fitted in well with the southern conservatism of Jones and Roberts. He was an autocrat and would have recognised the southern culture of a society where everyone was supposed to know their place. Scott maintains that MacKenzie's idea of political health "makes Reagan and Thatcher seem like liberals". In conversation MacKenzie would apparently enlarge repeatedly on the



"The practitioner of camouflage tries to set up insoluble confusions with the enemy" – Alister MacKenzie

Jones "conceptualised" Augusta, MacKenzie designed it. It would have "similar features" to St Andrews (two holes), two with Cypress Points, one hole similar to the fourth at Alwoodley, Leeds, and one each from North Berwick and Muirfield. The two men firmly believed it would become "the world's wonder course".

MacKenzie did not get a large fee for his work at Augusta. One person around at the time said: "If he made any money on that course he would hear the change jingle in his pocket". The hint is that the good doctor would stand many a round in the bar when things were going well. MacKenzie died before all the work on Augusta was completed and before the first "Invitational Tournament" would metamorphose into the Masters.

But if you are setting about creating "tradition" you cannot reveal anything that has been changed. From original photographs of Augusta and comparison with the course now there is more than a hint of change. The almost surgical detail of the way the course is looked after may echo MacKenzie's trade. But Augusta, though they will not admit it, is a pedigree product still evolving.

In 1947 Jones was struck with a degenerative spinal disease that eventually put him in a wheelchair. He remained president of Augusta until his death in 1971. It was Roberts who fashioned the club's image, who insisted on its independence and who cracked the whip others, even Jones himself, felt. Fewer FOBs and more CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) dominated Augusta's tycoon-ridden membership under Roberts' dicta-

torship. Augusta is, always has been, establishment. Eisenhower's successful Presidential campaign was launched and almost run from Augusta. Roberts helped organise that. He also organised the dumping of Nixon from the Vice Presidential ticket in 1952.

The club is almost exclusively white and is as much a reflection of the make-up of the Fortune 500 richest business as a racist slur. But it also seems an inherent part of the southern states' culture.

Only when forced, as they were recently when Lee Trevino and others threatened to boycott the Masters unless the club changed its membership policy did the club relent and admit its first black member. But a few black faces in the clubhouse change little. If Trevino wanted appearances changed, then fine, Augusta would change its appearance. That is the business the club has always been in.

Perhaps the pinnacle horror of such a policy is the treatment Roberts handed out to his long-term friend, Jones' disease had worsened. The legend in his wheelchair could hardly hold on to a cigarette. At that time the "tradition" was for Jones to present the Masters champion with the coveted Green Jacket. But image must have got the better of Roberts. The extremely ill Jones was banned from taking part in the televised jacket ceremony. The fall-out was that Roberts was not invited to attend Jones' funeral in 1971.

Regardless of Roberts' prejudices and autocracy, his created tradition will be on display again this week. Try telling anyone in golf it is not real and no one will believe you.

Brittle should not be allowed to be a dictator

Leaving aside such arcane pursuits as clay-pigeon shooting, we can agree that, of all sports, it is at rugby (both league and union varieties) that England are now best. In rugby union, they occupy a world position between third and fifth. The optimistic will claim that they could and should have beaten France in that spiritless play-off for third place in the World Cup. The more realistic may say that their place lies below France's, and that Australia – in addition to the inevitable South Africa and New Zealand – are above them as well.

No matter, England are clearly now a force in international rugby such as they have not been since the early 1920s, when, in any case, worldwide competition did not exist on anything like its present scale. For their current pre-eminence,

they can thank, first, Geoff Cooke and, second, the Courage Leagues, in particular the intense competition which has been generated by the First and Second Divisions and did not exist previously – when, for example, Wasps were not even on Harlequin's fixture list.

There are those who pay tribute also to the Rugby Football Union's famous "structure" of A-teams, development squads and the rest. I am afraid I do not. Young players who do not reach the squads go unnoticed; while others who find a place and are then discarded become discouraged. But this is the way. My view is that English rugby of the 1990s is that



ALAN WATKINS
on rugby

to make a formal and belated recommendation for entry into negotiations with the First and Second Division clubs. Brittle is not or should not be allowed to be a dictator. He can be given

instructions constitutionally. If he disagrees with them, he can resign. I am writing by the way, before the announcement of whether or not there will be relegation from the First Division. Whatever the decision, it is a disgrace that it has taken so long to make, until the very last month of the season.

If there are negotiations, as there must be, their outcome will be determined less by rationality and common sense than by the resolution of interests, of which financial interests will predominate. I am here giving what would, in my opinion, be the ideal solution rather than any that will be adopted.

Both divisional and county competitions would be abolished completely, consigned to the rugby museum. Why Brittle supports the counties, and Fran Cotton has suddenly become attached to the divisional competition, are equally mysterious to me. The sole purpose of the County Championship has long been to allow Cornishmen, Yorkshiremen and others from the outer fringes to come up to Twickenham to make a lot of noise, deluding themselves the while that their rugby prowess is increasingly recognised in the Courage League tables.

The divisional competition is a more serious affair. It is certainly taken most earnestly by the RFU, which arrogantly excludes non-England qualified players from participating in it. But no one really cares about it at all. Bath against Harlequins last Saturday generated more interest and provided a better game than the South-West against London Counties would ever have done. I certainly hope the next touring party to visit England play Bath, Harlequins, Leicester and Sale – or whoever are at that time the best sides in, respectively, the South-West, London, the Midlands and the North – rather than the divisions.

In addition, contracts would be between players and clubs rather than between players and the RFU. These individual contracts would, however, be governed by a written agreement between the RFU and the clubs collectively, providing that the interests of a Five Nations country (Wales, Scotland, Ireland and, yes, France as well as England) would predominate over those of a club.

But recently it seems to me that the countries, England especially, have been claiming too much, notably in the cavalier way they remove players for whole training sessions. As Clive Woodward complained on Saturday, referring to Ireland not England, this is unfair. Though his language was temperate, his conclusion was correct. And needs to be properly addressed in the coming months. Some hope!

sport

Sack race with hundredweight of history

Andy Martin
with the runners
at the 33rd World
Coal Carrying
Championships in
Yorkshire

The Royal Oak in Gwathorpe, Yorkshire, was the start of the 33rd World Coal Carrying Championships which finished 1,012 metres and one hundredweight later at the freshly painted maypole on the village green.

But the race's origins go back to another pub, The Beehive, one Sunday lunchtime in 1963. "You're looking tired," said one miner, Louis Hardley, to another, Reggie Sedgwick. "I'm fitter than thee" came the riposte. "And I'm fitter than the both of you," chipped in Amos Clapham, a coal merchant. A heated debate ensued. Soon they were betting on who could run furthest and fastest with a sack of coal on his back - and so the World Coal Championships were born.

None of the three ever actually ran in it. There are two great traditions in Gwathorpe: one is competing in a coal carrying championship, the other is talking about competing in it. "There's a lot of folk round here that say they can do it," pointed out Martin Douglas, in his fifth year of running. "But when it comes to the day they're not there anymore. I take my hat off to any man that finishes it. There's a point when it's like running up against that brick wall over there."

Paul Hitch of the Gwathorpe Maypole Committee, which organises the event, sees it as another spring fertility rite "which goes back to the Middle Ages at least". But Roy Sykes, an ex-coal miner from Barnsley, now 49, who has won the Scarborough Coal Carrying Championships four times, traces its genealogy



Carrying that weight: One of the competitors takes the strain in Gwathorpe, Yorkshire, yesterday. In the men's event only two of the 30 entrants failed to finish

back still "look to ancient Greece. It's a race at dusk, javelin shot put: they were all originally weapons of war. Now they are accepted sports. This is the same, Greek warriors used to run with heavy weights on their backs. The Vikings trained the same way." He feels that the Baron de Coubertin missed a trick by not recognising Coal Carrying as an Olympic discipline.

Sykes was inspired by a painting in the Barnsley military

museum he used to see as a kid. It showed a soldier carrying a wounded comrade over his shoulder back to his own line. Now he sees all the Gwathorpe runners as heroes. "People think because it's coal it's dirty. But the thing is the sack weighs 50 kilos. It's irrelevant what's in it. The coal is only there because this is a mining district. But it could just as well be bag of flour or sugar."

Sykes wasn't running this year and was concentrating

instead on being "motivator" to the favourite, John Hunter, who came in second last year and found inspiration in Kirk Douglas in the film *Spartacus*. He saw Hunter as a hunter-gatherer type, a naked ape. "It's a spirit that's come down to us through time. We haven't changed essentially for millions of years. This is like carrying home the kill and still being able to run from the sabre-tooth tiger."

A dramatic last-minute entrant in the women's race (same

distance with a half a hundredweight sack) was a woman with another good mythic-martial name, Belinda Archer. She is a nurse who has run the London Marathon. But with a shoulder injury and without training she was out of the race until she realised there were only three women competing. "It's ridiculous there are so few women going in for it. They're indoctrinated into thinking they're no strength. But we're carrying heavy weights all the time - if it's

not shopping it's kids. Women are stronger than they think they are." She suspected they had some psychological block about carrying coal. "But it's not even dirty." The women's coal is wrapped in a plastic bag before being put in the sack, although the men prefer to arrive trailing clouds of coal dust.

She reckons she was only an average all-rounder rather than a specialist runner and that therefore the coal carrying was not beyond the capabilities of any

fit woman. "You don't have to be Arnold Schwarzenegger to win. In fact it's a disadvantage to be too muscular. Body-builders can pick up a bus - but they can't run to catch it. Too much lactic acid in the muscles."

The secret was "a good knuckle hold - get a solid lump in your hand." Archer came in second to Pauline Oldfield, a fell runner who had cunningly prepared for coal carrying by competing in a straw bale carrying race.

Cheered on by hundreds of locals lining the uphill route, another last minute entrant led nearly all the way. But Lee McAvoy was overtaken on the flat, a hundred yards from the maypole by Mick Scott, aged 36, a builder and ex-rugby player who finished in 4 min 36sec. John Hunter came in third. Two men out of the 30 strong field failed to finish, too old or too weak, presumably picked off by a hungry sabre-tooth.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Trevor Cherry

Play-off candidates Huddersfield had not been nearer a top-flight place since they won the Second Division title in 1970 with the team that unveiled Frank Worthington's goalscoring talents and pushed the 22-year-old Trevor Cherry to the fore.

Should the Terriers go up this season, Cherry, now 43 and an associate director, will take some credit again, having been involved in recruiting Brian Horton as manager. "I felt Brian did well in difficult circumstances at Manchester City and he has had an exceptional season for us," Cherry said.

It was after a £100,000 move to Leeds United in 1972 that Cherry made his name, winning a championship medal and 27 England caps. He left Elland Road to be player-manager of Bradford City, where his Third Division title triumph in 1985 was overshadowed by the Valley Parade fire. Sacked in 1987, he rejected a chance to take over at Sunderland but has no regrets about leaving management behind.

"The fire affected me, I'm sure,"

Jon Culley

Ford adds bonus for Cardiff

Rugby Union

STEVE BALE
Aberavon
Cardiff
41

Bonus points for tries may be a farce and even an incitement to dishonesty but they are keeping the Welsh season alive to its long-drawn-out end. A full house of five points - two for yesterday's win and three for seven tries in the first half and then battle for the win in the second.

It is less far-fetched than it seems but anyway it is quite complicated enough trying to work out the computations at the top without worrying about the bottom as well. This will run and run, rearranged fixtures will bring Pontypridd up against

Today, Cherry, married with three children, runs a successful promotions and corporate hospitality business, based in Huddersfield but which often takes him to Leeds, with whom, he admits, his son, Darren, had trials with Leeds but now, like his New York-based brother, Ian, 25, is a chartered accountant. His daughter, Danielle, is a student.

The Wizards, as they are

sometimes known, have conjured up a few new, eight to be precise, and they are last in the First Division. If we are to believe one entirely mischievous suggestion, when they play the penultimate placed Aberavon on 20 April there would be every incentive to allow each other to score seven tries in the first half and then battle for the win in the second.

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RUGBY UNION RESULTS

Welshmen Welsh League
First Division
Aberavon — 19 Cardiff — 41
Club Matches
Bridgend — 27 Maesteg — 12
Cross Keys — 48 Tregaron — 21
ACT Brumby 23

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both Cardiff and Neath in the first half of May.

Eventually Cardiff won easily enough but, in praise of Aberavon, they have obtained bonus points from far inferior performances this season and Cardiff made such heavy weather - in heavy weather - of achieving superiority that by half-time Jonathan Humphreys was their only try-scorer.

In the second half Aberavon managed tries by Phil Wainle and Richard Diplock, but by this time the game was beyond them. Steve Ford went on to score three for Cardiff, the third his 19th in the league and therefore only one short of the season's

record jointly held by Ieuan Evans and Wayne Proctor. Yesterday's others came from Andrew Booth, Owain Williams and Adrian Davies, the latter no longer even pretending he is not about to sign for Richmond.

Ford is only 12 away from the Cardiff record of 185 held by Bledyn Williams - though the significance of rugby history is being eroded by professionalism and the importance of league rugby. Cardiff revealed their priority by starting with only two of those who faced the Barbarians on Saturday - formerly the prestige fixture of their season.

Aberavon: Tries Wainle, Diplock, Williams, Ford, M Hall, J Davies, S H, D Davies, A Booth, Williams, Conversations A Davies, 3. Aberavon: R Williams, B Graham, C Letty (H), M Williams (capt), G Williams, D Austin (A), B Evans, T2, J Hughes, R Jasper, P Capham, S Thomas, A Morris (R Morris), 45, G Evans, C Williams, M Raynor, S Ford, M Hall, J Davies, S H, D Davies, A Booth, M Griffiths (P Booth), 60, J Humphreys (Panteg), 72, L Mustes, 62, D Williams, G Williams (capt), C Lewis, 72, O Williams, H Taylor (capt).

Referee: C Thomas (Neath) replaced by H Bannister (Gorslon), 13.

Castleford agree to Botica joining Orrell

Franco Botica, currently under contract with Castleford Rugby League club, has finally signed for Orrell. The 32-year-old, now fully recovered from a broken leg, has been given permission by Castleford to play union during the league close-season next winter.

Orrell completed the two-year deal, believed to be worth more than £40,000, after Moseley dropped out of the race. "I'm glad it's all sorted out. I've very keen to play union, but at the moment league is my priority," said Cliff Brittle, the Rugby Football Union executive committee chairman, who will today attempt to explain publicly the issues involved in negotiations between the two factions.

Donald Kerr, the chairman of English Professional Rugby Clubs, said: "We believe it is the only fair way and hope the RFU will see the similarity with their own example. I emphasise this would be for one season only and would be the same arrangement that has already been agreed by the RFU for Division Two this season."

England's leading clubs launched another attack in their increasingly bitter battle with the Rugby Football Union yesterday. They reaffirmed their stance that relegation from the First Division should be suspended for this season.

Cliff Brittle, the Rugby Football Union executive committee chairman, will today attempt to explain publicly the issues involved in negotiations between the two factions.

Botica, who won the first of seven All Blacks caps in 1986, switched codes to join Wigan in 1990. He chalked up the fastest 1,000-points haul in league history in the 1992-93 season. He also holds the Wigan records for points (423) in a season and goals (186) in a season.

Referee: C Thomas (Neath) replaced by H Bannister (Gorslon), 13.

Place 6: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 7: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 8: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 9: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 10: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 11: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 12: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 13: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 14: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

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Place 17: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 18: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 19: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 20: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 21: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 22: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 23: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 24: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 25: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 26: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 27: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 28: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 29: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 30: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 31: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 32: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 33: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 34: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 35: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 36: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 37: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 38: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 39: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 40: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 41: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 42: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 43: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 44: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

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Place 46: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 47: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 48: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 49: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 50: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 51: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 52: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Place 53: E 27, B 26, S 24, D 23.

Gale has too much puff for Jodami

GREG WOOD

Weight or age will eventually stop any horse, and it was a mixture of the two which reached out to grab Jodami, the 1993 Gold Cup winner, on the run to the last in yesterday's Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse. On the turn for home, Peter Beaumont's chaser seemed sure to emulate Desert Orchid by adding the feature race of Easter to his success at Cheltenham, but the energy drained from him with a barely a furlong to run and it was Feathered Gale, under 10 stone, who galloped past to give Arthur Moore his first Irish National as a trainer.

It looked a most unlikely outcome with three fences to go, with the British raiders Cool Dawn and Jodami still on the bit. Go Go Gallant marginally less so, and Feathered Gale being positively rolled along by Francis Woods. While Feathered Gale lacks a serious turn of foot, however, he does not stop either, and after he had jumped past Jodami at the final fence, victory was a formality.

Those who had backed him were rewarded at 8-1, but there was more disappointment than delight on the terraces as Jodami, eight lengths further back, had been supported down to 5-1 favourite on the day. Cool Dawn, at 15-2, was third, with Go Go Gallant and Charlie Swan fourth at 7-1.

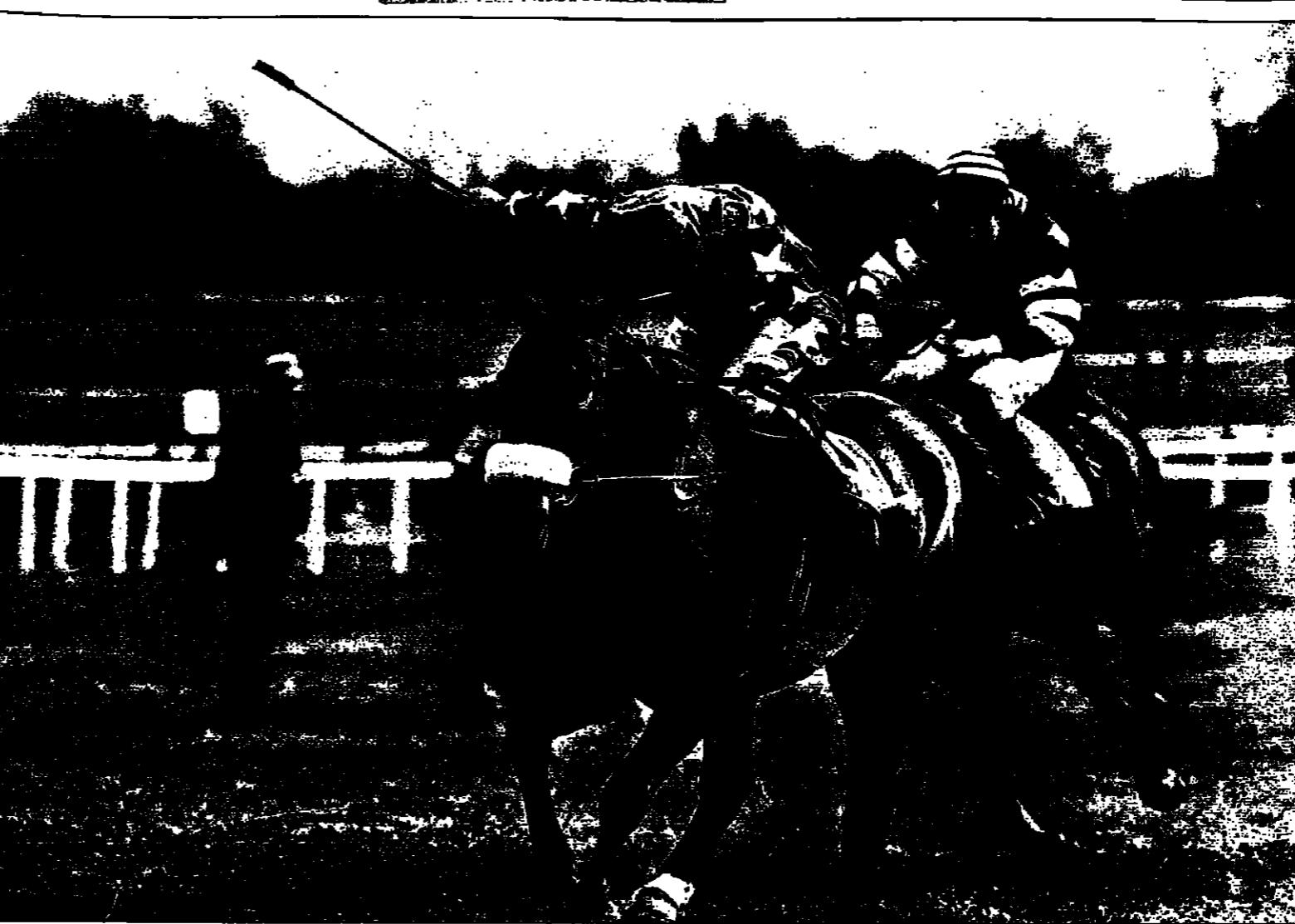
Arthur Moore, who has won most of the races which matter several times over, took great delight in saddling his first Irish National winner, having taken the race as a jockey on King's Sprite in 1971. "It has always been my ambition to train the winner of this race, like my late father, Dan," Moore said, said,

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Pebble Beach
(Wetherby 2.20)
NB: Franky Fran
(Southwell 3.00)

in the market from 7-2 to 6-1, Magnificent Style routed her in the opening maiden, apparently to the surprise of her trainer. "I didn't really fancy her much today, I thought she'd get a place at best," Cecil said.

Ray Cochrane must have felt much the same in two of yesterday's most valuable events, but in both the Quail Stakes and the Rosebery Handicap he arrived at the last possible moment to seize victory, at combined odds of over 70-1.

Hard To Figure, who at 10 years of age is just a season younger than Jodami, demonstrated that he has at least one more good campaign in him by beating Easy Dollar in the Quail Stakes, and given the grey's considerable popularity, the only real surprise was that he was allowed to start at 11-2. "He's a bit of a freak, and his full brother is totally useless," Ron Hodges, his trainer, said,



Feathered Gale, under strong driving from Francis Woods, holds Jodami in yesterday's Irish Grand National

Photograph: Caroline Norris

Toogood for Timeform pair

The Tim Easterby-trained Toogood To Be True, owned by the *Timeform* directors Reg Griffin and Jim McGrath, gained some compensation for missing the Grand National with an infected hock when winning the featured Wetherby Handicap Chase at the West Yorkshire track yesterday.

"We now had 21 wins from our last three horses with the Easterbys," Griffin said, "12 from this one, six from Beneficiary and three from Instantaneous." The winner may now go for the Scottish National.

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Beneficiary (3.50) sent 256 miles from E Ainer's Drove stable in Dorset.

WETHERBY

HYPERION
2.20 Pebble Beach
2.50 Newlands-General
3.20 ERZADIAN (map)
3.50 Beaupreare

GOING: Good. **Surface:** All-weather oval circuit. Run-in of 200yds slightly uphill. **Racecourse:** In north-east of town on B1224 near junction of A58 and A1. **Admission:** Chbs 5.12 (accompanied under-16s free); TetraCells 5.7; Concorde 5.2 (cars, including up to four adults 5.6). **CAR PARK:** Free.

SIS

LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: Mrs M. Healey - 44 winners from 180 runners at a 27.5% giving a return to a 51 level stake of 517.16. M H Easterby - 29 winners, 140 runners, 20.7%, 42.8%; G Stachurski - 25 winners, 123 runners, 20.3, 32.7%; J. P. O'Brien - 18 winners, 100 runners, 18.5%, 31.6%; M H Moore - 22 winners, 110 runners, 15.5%, 30.6%; M H Nicholls - 15 winners, 51 runners, 31.4%, 25.0%; M W Easterby - 15 winners, 104 runners, 14.9%, 34.1%.

LEADING JOCKEYS: P. Moore - 43 wins, 165 rides, 24.2%; A. Maguire - 20 winners, 76 rides, 20%; P. Doherty - 19 winners, 77 rides, 14.7%; D. Moore - 18 winners, 59 rides, 14.1%, 32.0%; P. Doherty - 15 winners, 51 runners, 14.1%, 32.0%; G. Moore - 13 winners, 44.1%, 32.0%.

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Beaupreare (3.50) sent 256 miles from E Ainer's Drove stable in Dorset.

RACING CHANNEL NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS D) (DIV I) £3,250 added 2m 4f 110yds Penalty Value £2,705

1 430121 BALLOON (22) (J R Ainsom) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr R Ainsom 5 P Moore
2 214301 DESERT FIGHTER (22) (C M Moore) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr R Ainsom 5 P Moore
3 5 120125 PEBBLE BEACH (28) (J P O'Brien) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr P O'Brien 5 P Moore
4 6-132225 BEAUPREARE (28) (P Doherty) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr P Doherty 5 P Moore
5 6-132215 ERZADIAN (20) (A M Thomas) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr A M Thomas 5 P Moore
6 505232 COOL WINTER (28) (P Doherty) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr P Doherty 5 P Moore
7 505233 HENRYSON (28) (P Doherty) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr P Doherty 5 P Moore
8 430205 WINDY HORSE (28) (P Doherty) T Donelly 7 11.0 ... Mr P Doherty 5 P Moore

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RACE FOR THE PREMIERSHIP: Frenchman makes the difference again after Coventry's Busst suffers horrific broken leg

Cantona rescues ragged United

GUY HODGSON

Manchester United 1

Coventry City 0

No win at this stage should be derided but this was not an occasion that Manchester United will cherish come the end of the season. The three points will be, though, even if the gauntlet they flung down in Newcastle's direction landed with the softest of touches.

This was a ragged performance from the Premiership leaders who, disrupted by injury and suspension, flitted between the inspired and mundane. The fact there was only one goal will reflect which part of their character won out in the end. Indeed Coventry, desperate for points, might have embarrassed them with a goal of their own at the end.

Almost inevitably it was Eric Cantona who provided the game's one sure touch in front of goal. The Frenchman is conducting the nearest thing to a one-man crusade to win the title and he got the strike again two minutes after half-time. It is his seventh in eight matches and the fifth time in that period that he has been the one goal scored by United.

Few have been as simple as this. Ryan Giggs, a rare untroubled United success, crossed low from the left and the ball arrived in the six-yard box via Liam Daish's heel and the bodies of Paul Williams and Andy Cole. Cantona, after waiting what seemed to be an age, side-footed past Ogrizovic.

It was the high point of a game that was like United, good and bad in parts. The most fluent spell arrived when the players' minds had been distracted by an horrific injury to David Busst. The Coventry defender, challenging at the far post after 90 seconds, appeared to go over on his leg, and as soon as he collapsed to the floor it was obvious he was seriously injured.

Even Old Trafford, which is not known for charity towards visiting players, suspended hostility to applaud Busst as he was carried from the field, a dark bloodstain left on the pitch where he fell. He did not go back to the dressing-room but straight to hospital where it was later revealed he had a compound fracture of the right leg.

"It was horrible," Ron Atkinson, the Coventry manager, said. "All the players say it was dreadful and they are distressed. The result matters, but now we are more concerned about David."

United's goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, who was closest to the injured man as he was being treated, declined to speak to the press. "I couldn't talk about the incident," his message said. "I would just break down."

Both teams were affected by the injury and for 20 minutes barely a tackle was made. Para-



United in joy: Denis Irwin (left) congratulates his team-mate Eric Cantona who has just scored Manchester United's winner at Old Trafford yesterday

Photograph: Laurence Griffiths/Empics

doxically, Coventry, who pulled Williams back into the back four, prospered more, and they created opportunities that, had they been taken, would have given the game a different complexion.

After 15 minutes Noel Whelan eluded United's offside trap, burst down the left and was felled only by Peter Schmeichel's dive to his left. Dublin was close with a header, too, and John Salako's left-foot shot after 31 minutes would have been better if it had been further away from the goal as Whelan was charging towards the far post.

You cannot afford to give United chances like this and as they recovered their composure they began to pin Coventry in their area. Andy Cole had three chances, Brian McClair was just wide with a hanging shot and David Beckham shot high over when faced by only Steve Ogrizovic. They might have got five

goals; then again they might have been held to a draw.

After 75 minutes Dublin headed delicately into Kevin Richardson's path who, but for a bad bounce, would have been bearing down on United's goal. With two minutes remaining the Coventry skipper outflanked the red rearguard on the left but his shot sliced into the side-netting.

"We created so many chances,"

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said, "and we almost paid for them in the last 20 minutes when we seemed to stop dead.

But if you win your two matches over Easter you have done well."

Match report: 9 April 1996, Old Trafford, 34,000. Referee: G McGehee. G. Steele, M. Sutcliffe, B. Butt, M. McColl, G. Gigg, C. Cole. Substitutes not used: Parker, Bruce, Scholes.

Coventry City (4-4-2): Ogrizovic; Pelegrin, D. Whelan, Williams, Adour, Dublin, Whelan, S. Ogrizovic, Williams, Adour, Dublin, Whelan. Substitutes not used: Flanagan.

Referee: D Gallagher (Barbury).

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Results and tables, page 23



Coventry's David Busst is carried off on a stretcher yesterday

Photograph: Alisport

The difference an Eric can make

Eric Cantona has scored in seven out of Manchester United's last eight games. The only match in this run that he didn't score in was the FA Cup semi-final, against Chelsea on 2 April, which Manchester United won 2-1.

1 March	v Newcastle United (H)	W 1-0
11 March	v Southampton (H)	W 2-0
(FA Cup 5th round)	Cantona scored first goal	
16 March	v Queen's Park Rangers (A)	D 1-1
20 March	v Arsenal (H)	W 1-0
24 March	v Tottenham Hotspur (H)	W 1-0
6 April	v Manchester City (A)	W 2-2
(Cantona scored first goal from penalty spot)		
8 April	v Coventry City (H)	W 1-0



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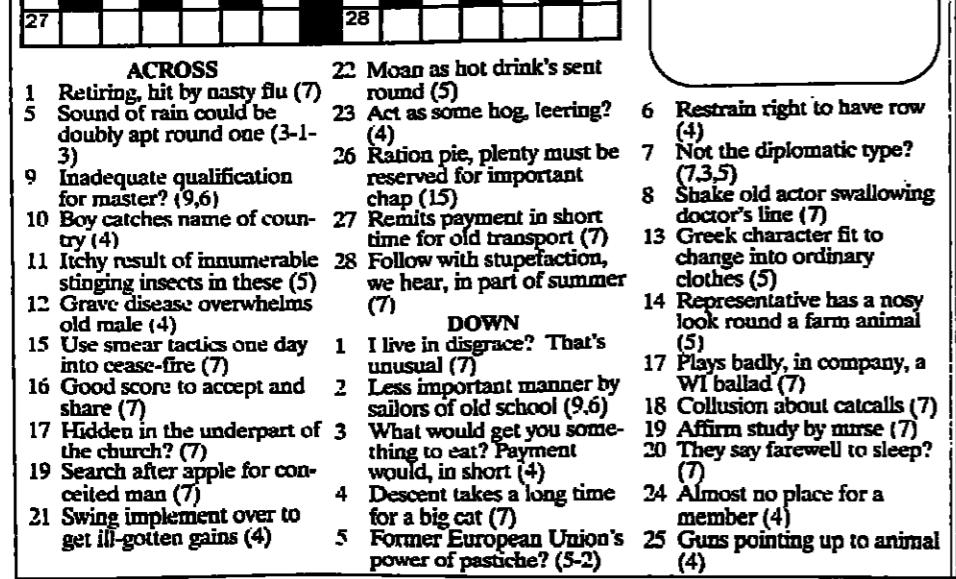
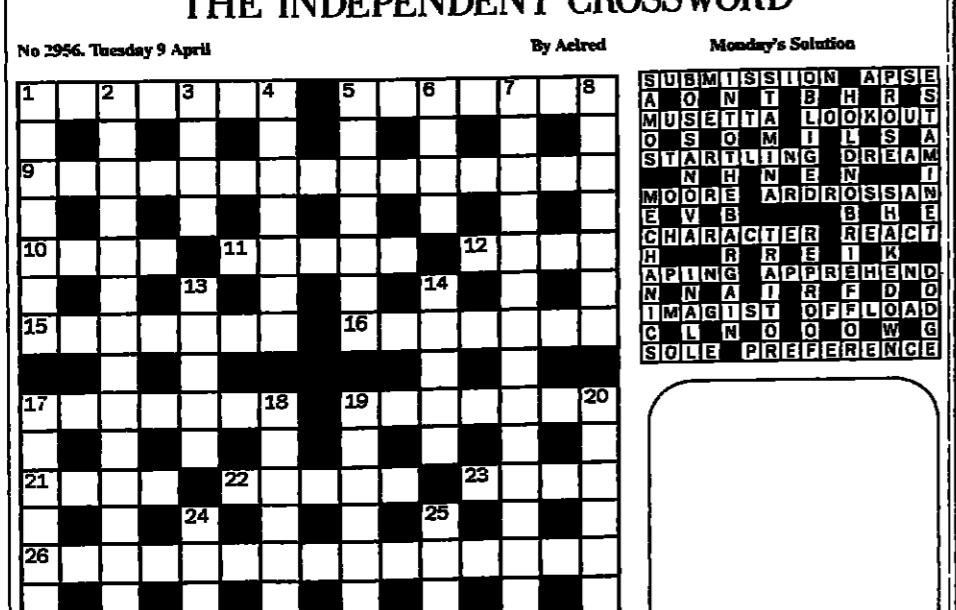
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By Asred

Monday's Solution



Wimbledon climb clear as City surrender

CLIVE WHITE

Wimbledon 3
Manchester City 0

At the final whistle, our one-time World Cup winner, Alan Ball, stalked off, not waiting to shake hands with his opposite number, his head held high, but surely not with pride at his team's abysmal performance.

Manchester City are staring

relegation in the face more

clearly than at the start of this

troubled season when they took

just two points from their first

11 games.

Even Ball found it hard to ex-

plain away this one, comment-

ing somewhat lamely: "We'll

have to do a little bit better than

that."

As understatements go, that

one takes some beating.

Moments before he had ar-

rived in the press box to link

arms with Joe Kinnear, an old

adversary from his (happier)

playing days, City's perfor-

mance had been put in rather

sharper perspective by the

Wimbledon manager. "If you

looked at the two sides today

there was only going to be one

winner. They are going to have

to do a lot better than that. They

may get away with it, but only

because of the poor quality of

the rest of the sides down there."

It was fairly damning criticism

and furthermore right on the

mark. Whether or not the Man-

chester derby had left them

emotionally drained, rarely can

a side have offered so little when

so much was at stake.

Lack of effort, of course.

has never been a criticism one

can level at Wimbledon and no

one epitomised better what

they stood for than Vinnie

Jones, who for all his faults, has

a voracious appetite for work

and was the driving force behind

this victory secured with three

goals in a 30-minute spell either

side of half-time.

When City eventually surren-

dered the initiative, they

record of one win in 18 League

games away from home.

A minute after the restart,

Earle headed in from an over-

head kick by Jones after Mark

Scales' own headed effort had

bounced off the crossbar. Bad

went to worse as Kit Symons

hooked the ball back across the

face of his own goal and Efan

Ekoku thundered in to make a

perfect connection.

Batedly, Ball introduced

Uwe Rosler and the sprightly

young Martin Phillips to the

proceedings but it was all too lit-

tle too late.

City were even denied a con-

solation goal when Georgi Kini-

adze wriggled free of his man-

marker to plant the ball wide of

Neil Sullivan only for Chris Perry

to race back and clear from the

goal-line. With 13 points out of the last 24,

Wimbledon are now sitting

pretty in the relegation race. Or

as Kinnear put it: "We're home,

hosed and smoking".

Not so Manchester City. If

there was any good news to be

had on this day, it was in the

shared misery of Southampton

and Coventry. But with their

poor goal difference, City

can ill afford to become em-

broiled in too close a finish.

Their last game of the season

is at home to Liverpool and for